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Tapped Out: The Role of Beloved Community in Sustaining DEI Practitioners of Color in NAIS Independent Schools

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Demonstration Project

Submitted as a partial requirement for the Doctor of Ministry Degree

Doctor of Ministry Program- Interfaith for Clinical Education in Pastoral Ministry

Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion

January 30, 2023

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Acknowledgements

If I am my ancestors' wildest dream, they are my deepest and most abiding roots. I am grateful for those ancestors -- known and unknowable -- whose strength, savvy, and love brought me to this moment. I am grateful to my Romney-Rosa-Stroud-Wallace-Wiley family-- whose physical, spiritual, emotional support is unparalleled. I'm grateful to the Higher Power that has allowed me to be open to the love and faith you offer me, to return it and to pass it on.

I am proud to be one among many powerful women research-educators, compelled forward by a passion to build and live today the world to come. Dr. Sandra K. Chapman, I began this journey inspired by you; our communities are more equitable due to your three plus decades of devotion to NAIS schools. I offer soul-deep gratitude to: MiChelle for your scholarship; Laura for your practical application (and reading every narrative I've written for 20+ years); Iris con tu "siempre positiva"; Eva for your commitment to healing; Rabbi Ellen Lippmann for your sponsorship, and franny, Roberta and Shadia for your no-joke antiracist organizing.

I am grateful for clients who allowed me to learn alongside my support of them and bring my learning to bear on their challenges and vision.

I am grateful to my professors at HUC-JIR whose devotion to their field leads them to inspire those who aspire to make an impact on it. Particularly, I offer thanks to the advisors who accompanied me on this journey--Prof. Obstfeld, Rev. Akers, and Dr. Harris. To my cohort, I want to express my ongoing joy and gratitude. I have truly been transformed by knowing, learning, and growing beside you. You are courageous, indefatigable, and true friends.

Thank you to each member of my beloved community who told and showed me I could do it and insisted that my research mattered, especially my mentor Ms. Barbara Crain Major.

Finally, I want to thank my daughter, Alejandrina, whose love, patience, compassion, encouragement, and existence made this journey possible. You are just everything, mi'ja! Together with my children of the heart, Andrei and Sophia, please know that as I complete this journey, this work is a manifestation of my enduring love for and devotion to you.

Abstract

As the work of Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) practitioners in Independent Schools becomes increasingly broad, complex, and challenged, this study explores the impact of a variety of factors in sustaining the work of equity and those with the primary responsibility of creating communities of belonging in independent schools. A central question is to what extent, if any, membership by DEI practitioners in beloved communities of belonging serve to mitigate the burnout we are seeing in the field among social justice educators and in the nation following three years of the COVID-19 global pandemic. This study used a quantitative instrument to collect information about individual demographics, practitioners' institutional profiles, and information about their experiences in the field and interventions for sustaining themselves in their work. While, based on this sample, burnout does not seem to be correlated to racial and ethnic identity, an analysis of the responses demonstrated moderate negative correlation between involvement in beloved community and the sum score burnout marker. Additionally, there are data that suggest that the opposition DEI practitioners face is more impactful in increasing their burnout marker than the support that they garner reduces it.

Keywords: beloved community, burnout, DEI, education, independent schools

You are worthy to be seen. You are worthy to be heard. You are worthy to be sat with, to be walked beside. Even in your quietest moments, you are worthy of witness.

- Toni Morrison

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Definitions of Terms

BIPOC (IBPOC) "Black and/or Indigenous People of Color. While 'POC' or People of Color is often used as well, BIPOC explicitly leads with Black and Indigenous identities, which helps to counter anti-Black racism and invisibilization of Native communities" (Glossary, n.d.)

Belonging "Having a voice and the opportunity to use it to make demands upon society and political institutions. Belonging is more than having access; it is about the power to co-create the structures that shape a community" (Glossary of Terms, n.d.)

Beloved Community inclusive and interrelated based on love, justice, compassion, responsibility, shared power and a respect for all people, places, and things, that radically transforms individuals and restructures institutions (Strong, 2018).

Burnout "a chronic condition in which activism-related stress becomes so overwhelming it debilitates activists' abilities to perform their activism effectively or to remain engaged in activism" (Chen and Gorski 2015)

Confidence Interval The level of confidence a researcher can have that "the true population value lies within the interval around the obtained sample result" (Cozby & Bates, 2019, p. 139).

Correlation (Pearson r Correlation Coefficient) "A statistic that describes how strongly variables are related to one another" (Cozby & Bates, 2019, p. 235) This is calculated by multiplying the p value by 100 and subtracting that number from 100 (e.g. p = 0.0753, correlation coefficient is 92.47%).

Diversity "Diversity includes all the ways in which people differ, and it encompasses all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. It is all-inclusive and recognizes everyone and every group as part of the diversity that should be valued" (Glossary, n.d.)

Equity "To treat everyone fairly. An equity emphasis seeks to render justice by deeply considering structural factors that benefit some social groups/communities and harm other

social groups/communities. Sometimes justice demands, for the purpose of equity, an unequal response" (Glossary, n.d.)

Inclusion "Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power" (Glossary, n.d.)

Independent School A private school, meaning a school that does not receive public funding, which is regulated by a board of governors or trustees.

Internalized Racial Oppression

The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond (2022) offers the following definition:

> "The conscious and subconscious acceptance and acting out your assigned racial role in a racially constructed society. Then we are born [or arrive in the US], we are assigned an individual race, and a race collective to belong to. Immediately, upon receiving our assigned race, the process of internalization begins. We are socialized to accept our racially assigned roles in the racial hierarchy, and to live and act them out, both consciously and subconsciously. The internalization presents itself in two ways: 1. the internalization of inferiority and 2. the internalization of Superiority."

Pirkei Avot Translated from Hebrew as "The Wisdom of Our Fathers", Pirkei Avot is a series of Jewish writings focused on ethics.

Talmud A collection of Jewish texts separated into two sections--the Mishnah and the Gemara.

Racial Battle Fatigue "the accumulative effect of racism people of colour experience in their everyday lives," (Gorski, 2019, p. 682)

Racialization Racialization is the very complex and contradictory process through which groups come to be designated as being of a particular "race" and on that basis subjected to differential and/or unequal treatment. (Glossary, n.d.)

Regression "Used to predict a person's score on one variable when that person's score on another variable (or set of variables) is already known" (Cozby & Bates, 2019, p. 241)

Whiteness

The term white, referring to people, was created by Virginia slave owners and colonial rules in the 17th century. It replaced terms like Christian and Englishman to distinguish European colonists from Africans and indigenous peoples. European colonial powers established whiteness as a legal concept after Bacon's Rebellion in 1676, during which indentured servants of European and African descent had united against the colonial elite. The legal distinction of white separated the servant class on the basis of skin color and continental origin. The creation of 'whiteness' meant giving privileges to some, while denying them to others with the justification of biological and social inferiority" (Glossary, n.d.)

The Heartwork of DEI Leadership in Independent Schools

Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) practitioners of all races at independent schools in the US move through their suffering with steadfastness, courage, hope, and grace, until they can no longer do so and must step back from the work of, what can feel like single-handedly, transforming schools imbued with race, class, and gender privilege. It is within the last several decades that schools belonging to the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) have begun to include on payroll a leader in diversity equity and inclusion work within their schools. While initially the primary task of the role was to steward the school's diversity goals, now, in addition to that, those in the role are charged with diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and justice among all of the school's constituencies--staff, faculty, students, families, caregivers (of the students), alumni, Board, and youth and adult visitors to the school. This includes being the teacher, the sounding board, the fixer, the go-to on issues of oppression of every variety; the interlocutor in conversations about the community's pain, isolation, and shame; remaining hope-filled, centered, strong, encouraging, and indefatigable; and doing so while appearing neutral to those that challenge the school's equity goals. This is a lot to carry and given the 1990 study of assistant principals in South Carolina, found that "a significant direct relationship between both perceived role conflict, perceived role ambiguity, and burnout score on the Emotional Exhaustion subscale of the [Maslach Burnout Inventory]" (Quarles, 1996), it is not surprising that the current context of a national culture war in the form of legislation and media debates about "critical race theory" being taught in schools is only exacerbating the weariness of those these important positions.

For practitioners of color, this work is not simply ideological, but deeply personal with high personal, professional, and communal stakes. As a result of exposure to racial prejudice, the work is not an academic or intellectual exercise. There is the ongoing awareness that real lives are at risk--primarily those in their racial and ethnic communities. Finally, there is a sense that speaking up too forcefully will further marginalize them within the predominantly white

community of independent schools, straining their relationships with folks who can influence their employment, and that not speaking up enough will isolate them from the communities of people of color (POC).

As is true of the work of pastoral counselors, the transformational work of DEI practitioners, at its best, is the work of Gd. It is the work of remedying abuses of power and greed, and looking into the shadows to see where fear, masquerading as dominance and control, are running amuck. With all there is to navigate--internally, interpersonally, and institutionally--the insight and accompaniment of a pastoral counselor could prove a boon, not just to the practitioner but also, to the institutions, systems, and communities to which the practitioners are connected and that they serve. As we understand, an activist that finds themself in the place of needing to withdraw from their activism, takes with them an entire body of work, set of skills, and catalog of experiences. The support of a knowledgeable pastoral counselor, individual and collective settings, could help to pre-empt the need for such personal devastation and communal loss.

Since those closest to a challenge are also closest to the solutions, this research will help clarify the specific needs of DEI practitioners in schools and to be able to disaggregate that information by a variety of social and institutional demographics. These data, and the ability to understand what each person believes support and care can look like, will allow pastoral counselors to contextualize challenges for clients and to customize interventions that address individuals, but also move beyond them to an awareness that includes an institutional frame. Additionally, it will provide insight to ask better questions about what is needed to heal our world by supporting the group of people who are often spiritual and structural first responders.

What is the need?

Author and educator bell hooks writes, "To be truly visionary we have to root our imagination in our concrete reality while simultaneously imagining possibilities beyond that reality" (2014, p.110). DEI practitioners in independent schools are at the forefront of

organizational change and community change with respect to establishing practices of equity and reducing oppressive practices. They are called on to be activists, educators, mediators, coaches, confessors, social engineers, administrators, scapegoats, beacons, prophets, scholars, and arbiters, all while holding a liberatory vision and drive for the world they strive to create, and that their schools have committed to create. Along the journey, this role allows for greater thriving within school communities that admit what are referred to as "diverse populations" --those who have been historically excluded. However, at this point in the sociopolitical trajectory of the United States, racial and social justice educators are burning out. Specifically, among faculty of color, a data set from educational researcher Jason Kim-Seda (2022) demonstrates that in comparison with 10% of their white peers, "70% of teachers of color often or sometimes felt the 'pressure to perform at the highest level in order to negate stereotypes about my racial or ethnic group.'"

Social justice educator Paul Gorski, along with his colleague Cher Chen, did a comprehensive review of the literature for their study on social justice education activist burnout and Gorski extended that work as he studied racial justice activists. There he explains that, "The nature of activism…requires activists to sustain deep awareness of structural oppressions larger society is 'unable or unwilling to face'." Gorski adds that staying with this awareness results in racial justice activists putting pressure on themselves to make vast changes on the interpersonal and structural levels (2019, p. 669). Given the role that DEI practitioners play within independent schools, it is critical to sustain both them and their work.

Most contemporary recommendations to combat burnout are insufficient and individualistic. While many rush to the need for greater self-care within DEI spaces, almost all of the subjects of Gorski and Chen's (2015) study on burnout in social justice educators described a culture of martyrdom, one that exerts social pressure to dissuade activists from focusing on themselves by discussing burnout or self-care (Gorski & Chen, 2015, pp. 399-400) as it is considered a detractor from moving toward the anti-oppressive goal in social justice spaces.

Gorski also criticizes the individualistic nature of a self-care fix since a significant cause of burnout is "the competitive, uncooperative conditions within movements to which many participants attributed their burnout" (Gorski, 2019, p. 681), indicating that the genesis is, at least in part, collective. The ability to persist amongst all the obstacles will require activists to deconstruct the "oppression reproduced with great precision in their movements" (Gorski, 2019, p. 682).

What is required to sustain those who are activists of massive structural change around issues that are hard to face while withstanding racial battle fatigue? In order to sustain DEI practitioners of color, their schools, and their communities, we can turn to the literature which identifies some of the ways in which their needs can be met. Based on prior research about burnout, this paper explores what might be offered by collective acknowledgement and communal healing within Beloved Community in movement spaces to help sustain and support DEI practitioners in Independent Schools. Those on the front lines of anti-racism and other oppressions need a place and a space where they can acknowledge the realities of what they are experiencing and be received and understood for who they are, as they are. They need a collective space and a collective process to begin to rebuild parts of themselves and their spirits that can be stripped away by this work.

Stets and Thai comment on the power of convening in groups, stating that within a group setting, "The successful enactment of role identities…activates a sense of self-efficacy; … [members] gain a sense of control over their environment and confidence in their own abilities, [therefore becoming] an important source of feeling good about the self" (2009, p. 712). Not only will being in community help fortify a sense of self, but merely seeing ourselves as part of a group reduces stress and connects us to others. Relaying an exchange with the Archbishop Desmond Tutu about his insomnia, Douglas Abrams shares, "So much of our stress is dependent on seeing ourselves as separate from others...thinking about others and remembering that the Archbishop was not alone lessened his distress and his worries, as he

would say a prayer for them" (Lama et al., 2016, p. 101). Dr. Murthy, who wrote about the healing power of connection, frames not only personal and interpersonal benefits, but also social benefits to building relationships, stating, "Strong human connections can help us work through societal challenges…like climate change, terrorism, poverty, and racial and economic inequities. Addressing these issues requires dialogue and cooperation" (Murthy, 2020, p. 134).

Beloved Community could have a profound impact on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion practitioners, as individuals, within interpersonal relationships and within institutional change efforts. The term was popularized by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and coined by theologian Josiah Royce who described it as "a spiritual or divine community capable of achieving the highest good as well as the common good" (Strong, 2018). DEI Practitioners, as social justice education activists, racial justice education activists, and educators, would certainly consider anti-oppression work as a highest good and a common good, but the work can erode the spirit, can lead practitioners to feel separate from a divine force, and can sometimes feel lonely. By developing a Beloved Community for DEI practitioners of color, breaking down the isolation and shoring up the spirit, is to remind them that "God is a God of justice and not a cosmic bully" who expects them to "present a compliant false self to God while repressing genuine feelings" (Adler, 2013, p. 170). We know that justice advocates "struggle with profound personal responsibility for eliminating racism, a deep emotional relationship to racial justice, and feelings of isolation" (Gorski, 2019, p. 675). Beloved Community can offer a space of restoration amidst the struggle--a restoration of spirit, of self, and of divine connection.

Through quantitative data, this study aims to explore the role and characteristics of Beloved Community and map it onto the needs and experiences of DEI practitioners of color in independent schools. Additionally, there will be robust data collection about the social identity of practitioners and the qualities of the environment in which they are working with the hope of examining whether there are appreciable differences in how spiritual and mental health is experienced in the role across various demographics and experiences within one's institution.

Background /History of the context

Independent School Foundings

When the National Association of Independent Schools was founded in 1962, as a merger of the Independent Schools Education Board and the National Council of Independent Schools (National Association of Independent Schools, 2022), there were 157 member schools, including the oldest independent school in the country -- Collegiate School (National Association of Independent Schools, 2012). Collegiate School is a preparatory day school for boys "founded in New York City in 1628 by the Dutch West India Company and the Classis of Amsterdam, the parent ecclesiastical body of the Dutch Reformed Church for the colonists of New Amsterdam in New York City in 1628" (Collegiate School, 2022). The first independent school established in the North for Blacks was founded in New York City "by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, later known as Dr. Bray's Associates, to prepare Blacks for religious salvation" (Foster, 2020). From the late 17th century to the turn of the 20th century, independent school enrollment moved from 73.3 percent to 7.6 percent of the total K-12 enrollment in the United States (Hunt & Carper, 2002).

Integration and NAIS Independent Schools

In 1963, nine years after the ruling of the United States Supreme Court in *Brown vs. the Board of Education of Topeka*, NAIS published a booklet entitled *Negro students in independent schools*, which was "designed for heads of independent schools and for boards of trustees who have acted on or are now considering certain key questions on their schools' policies and practices regarding the education of Negro students" (Mallory, 1963, p. 2). While it is unknown how many "Negro" students who did not stand out phenotypically as such may have attended these predominantly white schools, it is known that *Brown vs. the Board* was not the introduction to integration for all of them. The constellation of schools describes their status in the following way:

> Some schools, such as Phillips Academy at Andover, Phillips Exeter Academy, and Mt. Hermon School, have had Negroes in their schools for nearly a hundred years. Others like a number of the Friends' schools have had Negro students among them for over thirty years. A good number of independent schools have had Negro students since well before the Supreme Court decision of 1954, and still more have made their general policy of being open to 'qualified members of any race, creed or color' an actuality since the 1954 decision. Still others have not taken action in this matter, and are wondering what their next step will be (Mallory, 1963, p. 2).

In addition to internal efforts on behalf of individual schools, in 1951, the National Scholarship Service and Fund for Negro Students (NSSFNS), which typically focused on collegians, spent twelve years successfully placing Black students in 46 prep schools, as a way to remove the barriers "standing in the way of many students potentially qualified to benefit from… establishing contact between students and academically demanding colleges" (Mallory, 1963, p. 11).

Some schools had attracted Black students without an institutional connection or active recruitment, like Germantown Friends whose principal stated that, "Such a situation depends both on the presence of a number of independent-school-minded Negroes in a community, and on the general knowledge in the community that a school welcomes Negro applicants" (Mallory, 1963, p. 8). Certainly, the distinguished history of the Germantown Quakers as the authors of the first US petition against slavery helped set the stage for being known as welcoming to Black students *(Germantown Quaker Petition Against Slavery (U.S. National Park Service), 2016)*. Still, there were other schools that had been open to students of color, but had never recruited. Their thinking was: "We would be glad to consider any qualified Negro, but none has ever applied" (Mallory, 1963, p. 69). With time, these historically white institutions had to "face honestly the simple fact that Negro parents, like other parents, are not eager to place their

children in an environment in which they have reason to believe they are not really wanted" (Mallory, 1963, p. 69), and, beyond that, where they would be faced with bigotry, cruelty, or violence.

For those schools ready to move to recruitment, NSSFNS president Richard Plaut recommended that schools make sure "the climate is right and that the trustees, faculty, and students are prepared" (Mallory, 1963, pp. 21-22). By this he meant not simply Board approval, but rather the foresight to see what issues might arise and a strategy for addressing them. Janice Porter, a member of the NSSFNS staff, ranked as follows the order of constituencies for whom the first steps are most difficult: "First, parents; then trustees; then alumni, school administrators themselves, faculty and, least of all, students" (Mallory, 1963, pp. 22). With this as a backdrop, an increasing number of schools went about "seeking out Negro candidates who might profit from the experience of an independent school," while focusing on "ways of making the experience within the school as enriching and satisfying as possible to each student, of whatever race and background" (Mallory, 1963, p. 2).

Developing a relationship with Black leaders inside Black communities was an important start to recruitment, but schools soon saw that there would be benefits (and costs) to recruiting Black teachers as well. The Parker School shared a recruitment strategy whereby a parent of one of the children in the student body, a Black elementary school principal, reached out to one local all-Black and one local integrated nursery school and "arranged that an invitation from these two schools be extended to a group from the Parker School to come and talk with parents and teachers" (Mallory, 1963, p. 9), thereby leveraging her relationships, reputation, and respect within the community to recruit students to the school. Soon, an increase in hiring of Black teachers would occur, causing consternation on the part of parents. This situation is well illustrated in the story relayed by the principal of an elementary day school in New England who, upon admitting several Black children over the summer, had chosen to hire a Black teacher. A white parent, whose white child would be placed in a class with Black children and a Black

teacher nearly withdrew her daughter from the school. The principal responded, "Withdraw your daughter if you choose. That will of course be your decision", but at the urging of the principal gave it some time and learned that her daughter was adjusting just fine (Mallory, 1963, p. 33). In fact, an increasing body of research affirms that "teachers of color are linked to positive academic, social-emotional, and behavioral student outcomes [for students of all races]" (Will, 2022) In the intervening years, the number of Black students and those who identify as people of color, rose. NAIS began keeping demographic statistics of students, teachers, and administrators in 1988. Between 1988 and 2021, the percentage of students of color in comparison to the total student body rose from 9.7% to 31%, while the percentage of teachers and administrators of color during that same period rose from 6.6% to 15.4% (National Association of Independent Schools, 1988–2021).

DEI Practitioners in Independent Schools

According to Brown and Swihart's paper "Time for Change: The Impact of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Practitioners on Independent School Campuses", "The independent school network's most explicit diversity management recommendation, suggested to overcome [equity] hurdles, is the daily service of a DEI practitioner at the individual campus level" (2021, p. 12). While the recruitment and retention of students of color remains a strategic priority for many schools, even more so is the recruitment and retention of faculty of color. Also, there is a shift in emphasis from recruitment (diversity) to meaningful inclusion. In the words of NAIS' senior director of public information,

> In the 1960s and '70s there was a greater push to just integrate and assimilate. It wasn't until the late '70s and '80s that diversity became less about numbers, and more about having a community that was inclusive and drew strength from the diversity of the student body (Ohikuare, 2013).

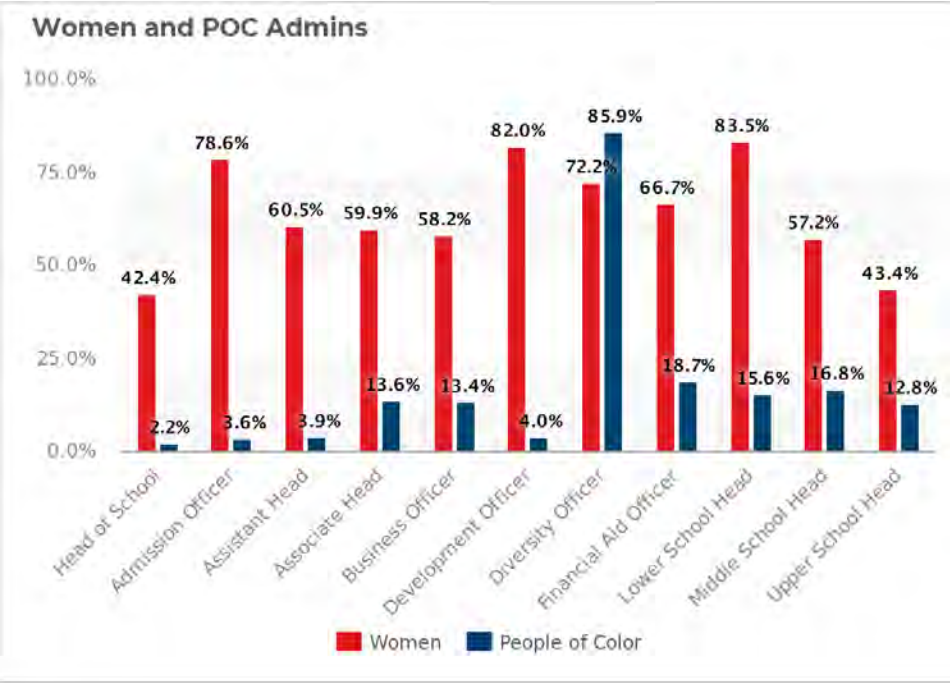
DEI practitioners, who have titles ranging from Dean of Community and Equity to Chief Diversity Officer, would be a key part of carrying forward the strategic initiatives relevant

to creating affirming multicultural spaces. Independent of title, this role is described as "one that thinks strategically about DEI implementation collaboratively with leadership in hopes of moving the organization forward" (Brown & Swihart, 2021, p. 12).

In the first State of Diversity Practice NAIS study published in 2009, 21% of the 181 respondents reported that the diversity officer role has been in existence since at least 1999 (National Association of Independent Schools, 2009). This role, in some independent schools, is in its third decade. As of 2022, 85% of Diversity Officers were people of color and 72.2% were women, as seen in Figure 1. Not only is the role overwhelmingly occupied by a woman and/or person of color, the role of DEI practitioner is the administrative job that an employee of color is most likely to have, with Financial Aid Officer being the second most likely at 18.7% of people in the role being people of color. This is the only role, among all of the administrative roles, where a person of color is more likely to be hired than a white person (National Association of Independent Schools, 2022b). By contrast, a person of color occupies the Head of School role in only 2.2% of NAIS' more than 1500 independent schools according to NAIS' Data and Analysis for School leadership (referred to as DASL).

Figure 1

Women Administrators and Administrators of Color in NAIS Schools.



In terms of the work of creating affirming multicultural spaces, the lived experiences of faculty of color is one of erasure where 83.8% report they are "often or sometimes expected to adapt to the dominant cultural norms of the school, as compared with 61% of their white counterparts" (Kim-Seda, 2022). One-third of teachers of color strongly or somewhat agree that they are "regularly experiencing a high degree of name calling, insults, threats, or harassment at school because of their race or ethnicity," including "19 out of 44 women of color (as compared to three out of 10 men of color) reported that a school leader committed a racial microaggression against them" (Kim-Seda, 2022). In addition to erasure and discrimination, they are additionally faced with "isolation, questions about fit, extra duties without pay, colleagues lacking racial literacy and awareness, and not feeling like they belong" (Kim-Seda, 2022). As evidenced by the Black@ movement initiated by Black students and alumni at predominantly white

schools across the country, chronicling the racial abuse they sustain at the hands of peers, teachers, and administrators, students experience similar attitudes and behaviors as their faculty and their Diversity Equity and Inclusion practitioners. So, it stands to reason that unlike white parents, who may be attracted to a sprinkling of students of color at their school that promises to prepare them for "an increasingly multicultural future", parents of color "are compelled [not] by 'diversity' [but] by…ensuring their kids' success in the still predominantly white spaces of the present" (Ohikuare, 2013).

Sociopolitical Upheaval

In January 2020, the first known person died of COVID, the pandemic that has since killed over 6.2 million people worldwide, 1 million of whom were in the US (Mathieu, 2022). While members of Congress reapportioned their investments for safeguarding from the impending financial impact of the pandemic, most of the world's population lived in fear; it was not yet clear how the virus was passed on nor what safety precautions should be taken. People who had the flexibility, could shelter in place in their homes, leaving them on an as needed, or as wanted basis. Schooling was disrupted and still continues to be, though less so. Hospitals were overflowing with dead and dying bodies. Cities and states were instituting curfews, shutting their borders, and regulating the movement of citizens. Black and brown communities were disproportionately impacted due to a system that advantages whites, the wealthy, and the abled.

On May 25, 2020, George Floyd was murdered by a Minneapolis police officer forcing his knee into Floyd's neck, compressing it for approximately 9 minutes, effectively strangling him to death. This was filmed by a local teen resident. With this the world came alive. The evening occurrence of clanging pots outside one's apartment window to show gratitude for "essential workers" became a daily routine, as with marching the streets for racial justice in cities and towns all over the world. Dr. Beverley Stoute writes in her paper *Black Rage*:

> As the demonstrations waged day after day, we craved moral leadership… George Floyd came to symbolize for the movement the moral injury that, for African Americans, stretched back generations, but now afflicted the nation. The parallel mirroring international demonstrations communicated to the world that the real pandemic was racism, and that Black Rage could be a shared, mobilizing human experience. Somehow, the daily demonstrations that month, almost two thousand nationwide, cracked the societal disavowal of personal responsibility for the violence, cruelty, suffering, pain, and denial of promised freedom in understanding the narrative of the American psyche (Stoute, 2021, p. 267).

The pandemic of COVID and the pandemic of racism began to be referred to as the dual pandemic and both of them continue with us today.

Amidst the pandemics, the United States had a presidential runoff. This led to the election of the 46th president, Joe Biden, and a conspiracy theory, amplified by the 45th president, that he had not been legally elected. Those who believed in this theory laid siege to the Capitol building on January 6, 2021 in an attempt to interrupt the ratification of the votes that would confirm Biden's win. More lives were lost as a result of the "aggrieved entitlement that led to racialized and gendered violence" (Katz, 2021). The attempted coup, however, was not successful that day. The fight for power and control has moved into the educational sphere, among others. The current political landscape continues to be "animated with white racial reaction and conservative race-conscious movements [including] emboldened attacks with several states' legislative efforts that target pedagogical and curricular efforts aimed at social justice …[a] US presidential banning of Critical Race Theory in federal trainings" with the aim of shutting down honest teaching about US history" (Vue, 2021, p. 2) by "conservative groups quickly and efficiently train communities to take on school districts in the name of concepts that

aren't even being taught in classrooms" (ProPublica, 2022). The government is also playing a supporting role, for example Florida's governor recently banned AP African-American History (Pendharkar, 2023).

Finally, during the last two plus years of global pandemic and national uprisings, there have been high levels of attrition in the helping professions. According to Pew Research, what is now termed "The Great Resignation" reflects a national quit rate marking a 20 year high in late 2021 with lack of respect being among the top three reasons employees left their workplaces and low wages as the primary reason (Parker & Horowitz, 2022). The American Psychological Association describes burnout as "physical, emotional, or mental exhaustion accompanied by decreased motivation, lowered performance, and negative attitudes toward oneself and others" (2022). During the last two years, there has been a greater than normal demand on those in education. In addition to the typical causes of vocational burnout, "job autonomy, workload, lack of organizational funding, and workplace personnel shortages" (Gorski, 2019, p. 670), there has been the huge emotional toll of the pandemic itself, concurrent with a need to provide communal leadership. In the arena of DEI work, the NAIS has significant challenges ahead which are rooted in both the history of independent schools and the current social, political, and economic dynamics in which they operate (Brown & Swihart, 2021, p. 10). This paper seeks to explore how we sustain leadership for equity work amidst all of these current realities.

Positionality and Perspective of the Researcher

Imani is a cisgender, able-bodied, middle-class, Jewish afrolatina who lives in Brooklyn, NY with her daughter. She continually strives for Shalem (whole-ness) in herself and to build it in the world. She was born to two movement builders in the mid-1970s who belonged to several Beloved Communities. Her mother, Pat Romney, was a member of the Third World Women's

Alliance and her father, Joaquín Rosa, organized to establish one of the first ethnic studies departments in the country--The Puerto Rican Studies Department at CUNY Brooklyn College.

During the pandemic, she co-created two different Beloved Communities. The first was a drop-in coaching space for school leaders of color. The second space was co-convened with a colleague. This space was a coaching and group process space for Black identified educators to heal and create co-liberation. These collaboratives and the individuals who participated, in part, inspire the research presented here.

What does the psychological literature have to say about my research issue?

Self States

The self is made up of many different ways of being, each with "different affective, perceptual, and cognitive features" (American Psychological Association, 2022) that allow us to respond differently in different situations. In health, these "self-states are thought to be sufficiently compatible to allow for internal conflicts of wishes and desires within the person" (American Psychological Association, 2022). Unresolved attachment-based trauma can cause rigid sequestration among these states. Bromberg, who coined the term, says that our ability to "live a life with both authenticity and self-awareness depends on the presence of an ongoing dialectic between separateness and unity of one's self-states, allowing each self to function opti-mally without foreclosing communication and negotiation between them" (Bromberg, 1996, p. 514). There is the potential for humans to lose sight, early in our lives, of some of our selves. According to Bowlby, a child will integrate thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that her attachment relationship(s) can accommodate while excluding those that "risk disrupting attachment relationships" (Wallin, 2007, p. 116). Therefore, when working to maintain the connection among the self-states, deeply tuning in, with the help of a supportive other, will help to "integrate what has been defensively dissociated or excluded…that is yet unspoken, unthought, and perhaps, unfelt" (Wallin, 2007, p. 116). For the DEI Practitioner in schools, particularly those of color, one feature of the job is to be able to move frequently among the constituencies of the

educational environment requiring the awareness about affect, perception, and cognition to be fluid and agile. This is especially important in working to achieve intrapsychic integrity in the face of social systems that seem to replicate the disavowal and exclusion present in traumatized individuals.

Internal Family Systems

According to Richard Schwartz, the Internal Family Systems model was inspired and revealed to him through his work with patients who articulated experiencing a number of polarizing forces within their own psyche (Wisdom 2.0, 2020). Based on their joint exploration, he was able to identify three primary components--the Self, Exiles, and Protectors. The Self is characterized by the eight C's--Clarity, Confidence, Creativity, Curiosity, Compassion Courage, and Connection (Schwartz, 2021, p. 6). Exiles generally emerge from childhood experiences that were wounding. Protectors keep the internal ecosystem in balance by making sure that the Exiles are not re-traumatized or that their feelings, if re-traumatized, do not overwhelm the system. There are two types of Protectors--managers and firefighters. Managers are planners; they run the preventative strategies. Firefighters are reactive; they go into action when an alarm wire has been tripped--stifle, soothe, distract (Sayen, 2020). As the DEI practitioner, maintaining awareness of other demands, both internal and external, while bolstering strong self-energy is key, particularly as they, their institutions, and the nation all weather polarizing forces. Here we are thinking of the concept of legacy burdens, burdens that are transmitted from generation to generation, whether through families, cultural groups, or nations. Schwartzian Guthrie Sayen says "The United States, like other nations, carries multiple legacy burdens that have been transmitted from one generation to the next…[including] racism, patriarchy, individualism, and materialism" (Sayen, 2020) Speaking specifically about racism, Sayen says, "Virtually all Americans, regardless of racial identity, carry the burden of racism…which causes trauma…[and] leads to internal and external exiling" (Sayen, 2020). In many ways, the role of

DEI practitioner in an educational setting is to hold collective oppression, the collective identities of those oppressed, and the collective solution to overcoming those oppressions within the school environment, and corresponding to the treatment of exiles, the most challenging part of the work is to integrate it into all the necessary facets of work at the school rather than holding it apart "over there" (e.g. just with students) or "only there" (e.g. just with diverse library books).

Martyrdom

Many equity practitioners are deeply devoted to the concepts of equity, liberation, and self-determination. Within independent schools, practitioners endeavor to co-create cultures of belonging where all can bring their gifts, share resources, and have access to full embodiment of the mission statement, particularly those from historically and systemically marginalized groups. Educators, in general, are known for going to any lengths for their students and, among equity practitioners, there is growing concern that the level of sacrifice required, expected, or offered compromises the well-being of the practitioner themself.

"Psychologists use the term martyr complex to refer to someone who…will sacrifice his or her own needs to please others" (Martin, 2021). While the work of anti-oppression goes beyond the simple desire to "please" others toward the drive to help others survive and thrive, it is understandable that the role and the work writ large are critical to achieving this outcome. Simultaneously, overperforming or a sense of over-responsibility jeopardizes the strides that can be made by the collective. Finding this balance is especially tricky when "people who are controlled [and] oppressed" (Martin, 2021) are those who are striving to create change.

Movement builder Arielle Angel writes (2022) that while power often lies beyond us, there is also ample evidence that it lies within us and "that we could *take power*—but only a capacious 'we.' To reach for mourning—to allow our pain to be neither repressed nor sanctified, but released—can be to trade a solipsistic victimhood for glimpses of this world-building force." What does it mean then to release our pain? In discussing activism during the AIDS crisis,

Crimp (1989) suggested that it first requires an acknowledgement, that "by ignoring [Freud's] death drive, that is, by making all violence external, we fail to confront ourselves, to acknowledge our ambivalence, to comprehend that our misery is also self-inflicted" (Crimp, 1989, p. 17). He suggests that we must pair militancy with mourning. Here is the potential for release and a way to avoid what Angel warns are:

> "melancholic patterns—the libidinous attachment to suffering supplanting real political aims—you find them in every group that has built a kinship on shared pain. They provide an explanation for why our left spaces, filled with those driven by the desire for justice, continually tear themselves apart with grievances unequal to the dimensions of the threat we are facing" (2022).

When we fail to attend to our own healing, when we sacrifice to the point of resentment, we begin to inflict the very kind of abuse on ourselves and others against which we are fighting. In her article about Black women in Independent Schools and the cycle of abuse, Phillips offers several antidotes: "I try to disrupt the cyclical culture of victim blaming and recreate spaces where BIPOC employees feel physically and psychologically safe to bring their authentic selves into our predominantly white institutions (PWIs). This is what we deserve, should fiercely demand or we will continue to leave (Phillips, 2022)".

Trauma

Resmaa Menakem (2022) says, "Trauma is about too much, too soon, too fast, or too long, coupled with not enough of something reparative." The Billboard hit "Surface Pressure" from Disney's *Encanto* (Darrow, 2021) captures well the attempts remaining whole while holding more than one person should have to sustain and remain whole.

> Pressure like a grip, grip, grip and it won't let go, whoa
>
> Pressure like a tick, tick, tick 'til it's ready to blow, whoa
>
> Give it to your sister and never wonder
>
> If the same pressure would've pulled you under

Who am I if I don't have what it takes?

No cracks, no breaks

No mistakes, no pressure (Darrow, 2021)

Given the pressures we experience during and following major traumatic events and even in the daily traumas of life, the psyche has created ways to continue functioning within family units, society, and community by creating pockets of knowledge that exist outside of the sphere of the people we refer to as "me". The creation of these pockets is referred to by different researchers and theorists as: dissociation, repression, complexes, dissociative identity disorder (DID), borderline personality disorder (BPD), and schizophrenia. When the pressure is too much, we give way to the cracks.

In her landmark book *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence--from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*, Judith Herman (1992) chronicles the study of trauma over more than one hundred years, discussing how the scientific research, both that which was accepted and rejected, ebbed and flowed with social movements of the times. She notes three waves of trauma research being "en vogue" and correlates the periods of "amnesia" (Herman, 1992, p. 7) about trauma to political movements and social moments that had not yet emerged or that ran counter to the spirit of curiosity. She discusses three waves of literature. The first wave was the study of hysteria in women, coinciding with the "anticlerical" movement of the late nineteenth century (Herman, 1992 p. 17), which sought to use science rather than religion (demonic possession) to explain behavior, while not wanting to deeply invest in the equality or liberation of women. The second wave of the study of trauma began with World War I with the suppressed data that "mental breakdowns represented 40 percent of British male casualties" (Herman, 1992 p. 20), though there was an attempt to attribute it to "the concussive effects of exploding shells…and resulting nervous disorder" also known as shell-shock. The third wave brought the idea of war home to the nuclear family and the treatment of women where "violence is a routine

part of women's sexual and domestic lives" (Herman, 1992, p. 28). This pivot coincided with the movement for women's liberation.

Coping with trauma, if it can be acknowledged at all, is challenging. In some cases, people develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). But what happens when the trauma is not an event or a series of events but rather permeates the whole environment as with PTSE--persistent traumatic stress environments--where the environment is "stressful due to the systemic and persistent daily inequalities and sense of subjugation that thrive there" (Ginwright, 2021, p. 115), a definition that could describe the experience of being a person of color in the United States. The overwhelm of these experiences can lead to dissociation. Dissociation, called splitting by the Freudians, splitting of the object by the Kleinians, or the development of complexes or splinter psyches by the Jungians (Howell & Itzkowitz, 2016, p. 24), is a way for the mind to compartmentalize experiences that it cannot (at the time) metabolize (Howell & Itzkowitz, 2016, p. 34) while these experiences still impact an individual's overall perception of their world. However, Chefetz describes the fracturing of the compartmentalized mind saying, "The elements of experience are spread across a mental landscape occupied by multiple self-states who like spies all sent on a mission to a distant land don't know each other's names, and only know that there are others like them who are on a mission, somewhere" (Chefetz, 2016, p. 204). This does not allow for the compatibility and flow described in healthy self-states.

Racial Trauma

One of the most salient traumas of race and racism in the United States is that it removes us from our historic sociocultural understandings of ourselves and places us in racial subcategories that are not real. "Race does not provide an accurate representation of human biological variation. It was never accurate in the past, and it remains inaccurate when referencing contemporary human populations. Humans are not divided biologically into distinct continental types or racial genetic clusters," (Subcommittee of the American Association of Biological Anthropologists, 2019). Race is not real, however racism is. Racism includes but is

not limited to "systemic inequities, … racial discrimination, and denigration of people of color" (American Psychological Association Council of Representatives, 2021) and the inverse for those who are not people of color. Using a principle from Bowen's systems model, "One can easily see that if any of the people caught in the relationship patterns were to manage their own part of the relationship differently, the pattern would disappear" (Gilbert, 2018, p. 21). Yet changing patterns that have had centuries to set takes steady work. Frantz Fanon believed that psychoanalysis could be of use and "shed light on the distortion of self, affect and others that maintain racist, colonialist systems" (Gaztambide, 2021, pp. 101). Some of the institutions of this country, including schools, have just begun to contemplate that work more seriously. Desegregation and multiculturalism were challenging, but the practice of equitable co-existence is even more so particularly given the propensity within normative culture toward individualism. In the 1980s book *Culture's Consequences*, "Hofstede examined work-related values of…'masculinity,' 'power distance,' 'uncertainty avoidance,' and 'individualism.' [and discovered that] the United States ranked ahead of all other nations on individualism" (Oishi & Su, 2010). It will be necessary to work on the intrapsychic level, the interpersonal level, the institutional level, and the systems level to move through to the other side of racism.

According to Tibetan Buddhist teachings, "What causes suffering in life is a general pattern of how we relate to others: Envy toward the above, competitiveness toward the equal, and contempt toward the lower" (Lama et al., 2016, p. 136). Within a scarcity mindset, it is easy to see how having or not having could define our relationships. Neyrey writes that what contributes to themes of honor and shame in the Bible is "the belief that everything in the social, economic, natural universe...everything desired in life: land, wealth, respect and status, power and influence ... exist in finite quantity and are in short supply. If you gain, I lose a 'zero-sum game'" (Bernstein, 2012, p. 2). The push to possess seems to follow incredible loss. The movement from ethnic and cultural richness, values, and traditions, to racialization is an incredible loss, a disconnection. The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond asserts that

"Culture is the life support system of a community" (The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, 2022).

Whiteness & Trauma

Looking at how trauma manifests through a lens of whiteness --"the ideology, not the biology" (Painter, 2020) -- will help give shape to the dominant culture in which DEI practitioners of color find themselves. Clinician Tada Hozumi defines cultural complex trauma as " the ancestral wounds of being disconnected from our parental cultures" and writes that it is not trauma that causes violence but that trauma provokes a sympathetic response and that privilege leads that response to more likely be "fight" rather than "flight" when threatened by IBPOC [Indigenous Black and People of Color]" Hozumi, 2017) and that "White people tend to have low emotional resiliency in relationship, especially around conversations about race, even though they experience vast amounts of White privilege...conversations about race trigger deep cultural attachment wounds for white people" (Hozumi, 2017).

Those who perpetuate racial violence seek to distance themselves from the reality of the impact of their actions. Whether killing someone for being in a place where they do not believe that person belongs or leveling an entire city, those who perpetuate racism are "adept at scapegoating, placing blame 'out there.' So often they appear to be on the side of righteousness" (Steinke, 2006, p. 64). This distancing, this separation causes more distress and less integration, as the Dali Lama notes: "Emotion… creates a chain reaction. With a self-centered attitude, you become distanced from others, then distrust, then feel insecure, then fear, then anxiety, then frustration, then anger, then violence" (Lama et al., 2016, p. 80). It is hard to locate the nexus of violence in oneself.

> To the extent that we wish to believe that our [white people's] violence, our greed, our exploitativeness, our passivity, and our dependence are 'out there' and not 'in here,' then the 'other' group, the group that is both similar and different, can easily come to represent what Sullivan (1953) called the *not*

> *me*…Now consider the way in which blackness in America gets constituted out of white projections. For white people in this country, black people are, to one extent or another, the *not me* (Altman, 2006, p. 60).

Not only do "racist projections invade the intersubjective space, and the Black racial Other is forced into the position of deflecting, defending against, metabolizing, or internalizing the toxic projections of the white dominant society" (Stoute, 2021, p. 277), but under this circumstance, eliminating the violence only requires the elimination of the externalization of that violence as located in the *not me*'s.

This leaves those who subscribe to whiteness in a challenging position -- disconnected, threatened, dissociated, and afraid. Hozumi writes that "ambivalent cultural attachment – Shows up as a back and forth between 'loving' and 'hating' other racial and cultural groups [explaining] how a person can over-attach to other cultures through cultural appropriation while enacting violence towards those same cultures. In addition to racism creating fear in the daily lives of people of color, there is "a mirror fear in the form of an 'oppressor's psychosis' among White people, in which they fear retribution from oppressed people of color from the violence they have subjected them to" (Gaztambide, 2021, pp. 93-94). Hozumi offers that it is possible to work toward "healing Whiteness internally and dismantling white supremacy externally" (Hozumi, 2017).

Darkness and Trauma

As Du Bois wrote, "We who are dark can see America in the way that White Americans cannot" (Love, 2020, p. 1). The lack of racial privilege in the United States means that people of color "tend to experience a lot more institutionalized violence and would be more sensitive to the impact of cultural complex trauma on their well being" (Hozumi, 2022). Additionally, preserving our cultures is an overwhelming task in the face of the daily work of being dark in this country and the impact of the "harms [to] the nervous system of IBPOC by destroying [our]

embodiment cultures" (Hozumi, 2022) and that level of detachment "lowers our resiliency in recovering from traumatic stress...not having access to one's culture means having a weak sense of belonging in the world and also less access to cultural resiliency tools" (Hozumi, 2017).

One outcome of the trauma of suffering from racism is Black Rage. "Black Rage builds up as an accumulated adaptive reaction…in this context Grier and Cobbs, and Hardy and Qureshi, all seemed to recognize that Black Rage, if mobilized in a functional way, has a culturally specific adaptive potential that can be transformative" (Stoute, 2021, p. 274). One might expect or fear that based on the oppression experienced, people of color, and in this case Black people, might be enraged at all times. That is not apparently the case, however, "In a racist society the oppressed are in a constant state of readiness to mobilize and modulate Black Rage as an adaptive defense, even when their affective state is manifestly calm" (Stoute, 2021, p. 278). It is important to be able to leverage the rage enacting rather than suppressing it. Stoute describes Hardy and Qureshi building on Grier and Cobbs's ideas to formulate the concept of rage as "the culmination of pervasive chronic, and recurring experiences with devaluation and the dehumanization of loss without benefit of redress that is directly and poignantly linked to experiences with degradation, marginalization and devaluation" pointing out that if internalized, "it turns in on the self, especially in the face of ongoing trauma, leading to depression, self-destructive behavior, substance abuse, and even suicide" (Stoute, 2021, p. 274).

While racism has an adverse and traumatic impact on people of all "races", people of color are not insulated by systemic advantages to the extent that white people are. In addition to the advantages from which people of color do not benefit, the disadvantages of what Volkan et al. (2002, p. 24) refer to as "ethnic or large group conflict" have multigenerational impact. Descendants of historical trauma, in early interactions with their parents and caregivers have the mental representations of these historic events "passed into the developing core identity and self-representations" and

the burden of "coping with the unmastered psychological tasks" (Volkan et al., 2002, p. 25). In order to insulate subsequent generations to the impact of racialization, there is "a transgenerational teaching of defensive strategies drawn from collective unconscious stores…foster[ing] group identification, cohesion, and survival" (Stoute, 2021, p. 281). Another strategy is to reconnect with the *soma*, the Greek word for body, to develop the countercultural attunement to "trust for the internal sensate experience" (Hozumi, 2017). Finally, findings suggest that, "The ability of trauma survivors to harness available personal, social, and community resources to help transform their traumatic experience appears to be a significant factor by which a sense of meaning and order can be restored" (Doucet & Rovers, 2010, p. 98).

In the Independent School world, this level of understanding is rarely discussed and, in the current sociopolitical climate, it has become more complex to do so without provoking guilt, anger, defensiveness, and/or aggression by opponents of the transmission of United States History. Not only is the content painful to broach by any practitioner with any audience, the fact that most DEI practitioners in independent schools are women and/or people of color means that their personal vulnerability amidst the work is more intense than those in groups who enjoy more social and political advantage. Despite that, it is important that the practitioner not overextend themself as it has the adverse effect of reducing engagement by others, as Bowenian theory demonstrates, "In the workplace, leaders can be overfunctioners. If that happens we will see an ebbing of the energy and productivity of the group" (Gilbert, 2018, p. 18). Striking a collaborative balance, steeped in self-honesty, containing a historical and structural perspective, and using a trauma-informed approach could make a significant difference.

Trauma & Healing in Personal Histories

The way that we have adapted to the traumas of our early development and the societal traumas existing in our skin can have a big impact on how we work with others,

especially in pressurized situations. Early in our lives we learn how to behave in ways that garner the responses necessary for our survival, namely those behaviors that bring us positive attention and result in our being loved, fed, clothed, and soothed. We also learn that if "any bid for regulation by the parent contributes to even greater dysregulation on the parent's part (Schore, 2003), this leaves dissociation, shut-down, as the only out" (Benjamin, 2006, p. 378) to receiving care. Childhood is where a lot of our relational schemas are developed and reinforced. The Adverse Childhood Experiences (Samson et al., 2019) test measures abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction and its results are highly correlated to well-being. Outside of the family environment, we also internalize messages about how to be and what to say and what not to say. Unless and until messages are made available on a conscious level, we have little chance of interrupting self-defeating patterns.

Those who work with people who have experienced trauma can also participate in the dance. Analyst Jessica Benjamin wrote about her parallel process with her patient: "The drama of repetition and repair in the case suggests for me how the analyst, too, moves between dissociation and awareness of the patient's catastrophic fears and agonies, between the bid for engagement and the fear of causing harm" (2006, p.377). For people who have suffered harm due to systemic racism and who have experienced adverse childhood experiences in the home, many of which coexist with attachment-based stressors, navigating the world in their bodies can be particularly hard. Coupled with an awareness of the structures that may have contributed to societal and familial harm, ameliorating that harm for others may be a way of trying to take back some power and control. Indeed, the efforts of people of color in "racial justice activism often is directly associated with the cumulative trauma of the racial battle fatigue they experience; those who perceive the most traumatic accumulative experiences with racism are most likely to become activists" (Gorski, 2019, p. 670). In such cases, there

may be an internal split between the innocent, blameless victim, the higher moral ground, and the "bad" violating oppressor. Additionally, rather than a healing process that goes inside out, many activists want to disarm the machine first.

A both/and approach is also possible. "Sullivan and Thompson believed psychoanalysis revealed 'the real conditions in the various levels of society...just as they are mirrored in the individual' and that it could help address the impact of poverty and inequality in both psyche and society" (Gaztambide, 2021, pp. 94). We know that both are necessary because if activists burnout and are not able to continue their activism, they are twice defeated, perpetuating the very fears that motivated the activism; and if oppression is not mitigated, their lives are compromised independent of their activism. As educators and DEI activists do the work of undoing oppression, it is important to also do the individual work that will allow them to sustain themselves within the cause for there to be lasting impact within the ecosystem.

Burnout

When Freudenburger conceived the term burnout in the mid 1970's, he was referring to vocational burnout "wherein people once passionate about their work grow exhausted, cynical, and detached from it" (Gorski, 2019, p. 669). Driven by Protestant work ethic and founded on extractive capitalism, it is not surprising to see this dynamic emerge in the United States. The Dalai Lama asserts that, "In the materialistic way of life, there's no concept of friendship, no concept of love, just work, twenty-four hours a day, like a machine. Author Somé writes that "to make Self, each person's own best spiritual project is to avoid the crush of the gigantic modern Machine," (Somé, 1993, p. 59). Continuing on the same thread, the Dalai Lama says that "in modern society, we eventually also become part of that large moving machine" (Lama et al., 2016, p. 128). While a great deal of literature has been produced about burnout of educators and activists (Gorski & Chen, 2015), Gorski and Chen (2015) and Gorski (2019) have taken a deeper look at how it specifically manifests in social justice education activists who focus on

issues such as racism, sexism, environmental justice in the educational context (Gorski & Chen, 2015, p. 386)--and racial justice activists- "people who identify racial justice activism as their central life passion" (Gorski, 2019, pp. 668-9). The concern embedded in the research is not only for the individuals themselves, but also for the ecosystem of justice work because, "When an activist burns out, she deprives younger activists of a mentor, thus making them more likely to burn out" (Gorski & Chen, 2015, p. 391), making these concerns particularly salient in the work of DEI practitioners in schools where DEI practitioners act as mentor to fellow staff as well as to students. While the literature suggests that emotional investment "makes activists vulnerable to feeling hopeless, overwhelmed, and discouraged [and] can culminate in burnout," (Gorski & Chen, 2015, p. 385), the current sociopolitical landscape and the starkness with which injustices have shown up within the persistent COVID pandemic can compound those feelings. As Jones asserts it: "As systemic racism is embedded in all of our social and environmental contexts, it is easy to conclude that systemic racism and COVID-19 are not just coexisting, they are interacting to exacerbate negative outcomes for communities of color" (2021, p. 427).

Social Justice Educator Activist Burnout

Gorski and Chen outlined three symptoms of burnout and explored the culture of martyrdom (2015, p. 385). The symptoms identified were: "deterioration of psychological and emotional well-being, deterioration of physical well-being, and disillusionment and hopelessness (2015, p. 395). There are a number of contributing factors to social justice activist burnout, but core among these is that "interviewees reported unanimously that they had been socialized within their activist communities to consider self-care 'self-indulgent'—to feel guilty if they desired to look after their own well-being" (Gorski & Chen, 2015, p.401). Given the intense input of emotional labor (Gorski & Chen, 2015, p. 385), what does it mean to position self-care as selfish, putting it into direct competition with an identity as someone who fights on behalf of all? This links back to the Protestant work ethic promoting "suspicion toward anything that feels good and anything that is self-directed… if I do something for myself that is selfish and I am not

doing good. What is good is to self-sacrifice for the good of others" (Gorski & Chen, 2015, p. 400). One activist reported that rather than dealing with the pressures she was experiencing, she was encouraged to "rise above it", increasing a sense of somatic dis-ease and disconnection (Gorski & Chen, 2015, p. 399). Each of the participants in their study reported "experiencing the impacts of the culture of selflessness or culture of martyrdom in their social justice education activist circles" (2015, p.401). This culture of (perceived) selflessness as well as beneficence is pervasive within the context of K-12 education.

In addition to the culture of martyrdom and selfishness, Gorski and Chen revealed a culture of silence around what activists are experiencing (2015, p. 389). When self-care is "looked upon with suspicion or even derision" (Gorski & Chen, 2015, p. 389), how can activists get the support they need to stay in the game? Given that marginalized people in the country have less access to systemic support, this isolation is especially critical for activists with marginalized identities who "must contend with additional layers of anxiety, stress, and emotional exhaustion related, not just to the oppressions their activism is targeting, but also to the oppressions they are experiencing" (Gorski & Chen, 2015, p. 390). In a culture that "at best, devalued and, at worst, shamed attention to self-care or conversations about burnout…those seeking support had to find it outside of their social justice education movements and organizations, often leading to their temporary withdrawal from those movements and organizations" (Gorski & Chen, 2015, pp. 399-400). We cannot ignore that the experience of leaving one's social and political network can also increase the stress and isolation one feels.

Racial Justice Activist Burnout

During 30 one-on-one interviews, Gorski extended previous research on burnout, applying it specifically to this study on racial justice activists. Among the activists, patterns emerged and four causes were identified: "emotional-dispositional causes, structural causes, backlash causes, and in-movement causes" (Gorski, 2019, p. 667). In contrast with general activist burnout, whose causes overlap with these (Gorski, 2019, p. 670), causes for racial

justice burnout includes "emotional dispositional causes" to refer to "a structural orientation to racism, understanding its scope beyond interpersonal tensions"; "deep senses of personal responsibility to eliminate structural racism…related to intense emotional relationships with their activism" (Gorski, 2019, p. 671). The outcome of these investments created an ideal sphere in which activists grappled with emotional and physical exhaustion as well as cynicism about the pace of change. Quoting the work of González, Gorski shares that "the combination of structural understanding and responsibility leads many racial justice activists to work themselves 'until their bodies cave in'" (Gorski, 2019, p. 672). In addition to the toll on their bodies, activists exert a great deal of emotional labor-- "channeling, legitimating, and managing one's own and others' emotions and expression of emotions" (Gorski, 2019, p. 670).

A great deal of the pressure to make things better is the awareness of the tenacious nature of racism. There exist whole bodies of research that quantify the extent to which, 'activists can become targets of violence [like] police violence, harassment, and character assassination". These attacks are more dangerous, still, for activists of color who are targeted more than white activists; are seen by law enforcement as more threatening; and suffer greater violence at the hands of the state due to their activism (Gorski, 2019, pp. 671, 672, 669).

Meanwhile, "As racism grows more explicit and anti-racism progress recedes, activists may feel less protected than racism's perpetrators and less hopeful about the possibility of progress," (Gorski, 2019, p. 668). While DEI practitioners garner institutional protection from officials of the state, they are still susceptible to attack from the dissenting internal constituencies within their schools as well as the media outlets who do not share their structural understanding (Sperry, 2016).

In addition to the distinct internal, institutional, and structural pressures activists manage, there is also significant interpersonal harm. Participants in the Gorski study were most taken aback by what he termed "in-movement burnout causes" which included sabotage and oppression between activists (Gorski, 2019, p. 681), while the internal and structural causes --

emotional, dispositional, backlash, and structural causes--participants spoke about as though they were expected. They expected backlash. They recognized their propensities for working to exhaustion. By contrast, concerning interpersonal harms they "expected - or desperately wanted - activist communities to be safe from the oppression they experienced elsewhere" (Gorski, 2019, p. 681), but the internalized racial superiority of white people permeated spaces of activism as well, leading to harm to activists of color and debilitation of the movements with which they purported to be allied (Gorski, 2019, p. 682). In addition to direct harm, there is also the indirect harm of white activists requiring care from their colleagues due to their being "mired in guilt and shame involving their whiteness, constantly re-centering their needs for validation from activists of colour, draining organizational energy and disrupting movement progress" (Gorski, 2019, p. 672). For activists, especially those of color, there is no refuge from the very racism they are fighting. Additionally, among activists "there is in-fighting and ego clashes" and "competition related to who had 'street cred', who adopted the most radical language, and who withstood the most oppression" that led to feelings of being "beaten down" (Gorski, 2019, pp. 679-680). Since current popular literature continues to direct attention to personal and internal causes of burnout, self-care would seem to be a logical response (Gorski, 2019, p. 672). Given, however, that it only addresses one of the four causes of racial justice activist burnout, this will not be adequate. Despite all that activists navigate, "displays of personal strain, sadness, or depression...are viewed...as unnecessary and self-indulgent" (Gorski, 2019, p. 672). This collective view of the individual as the problem belies a movement-wide tendency to deflect toward individuals and away from structural causes and therefore structural solutions.

Staving Off Burnout

Burnout is "a chronic condition in which activism-related stress becomes so overwhelming it debilitates activists' abilities to perform their activism effectively or to remain engaged in activism" (Chen and Gorski, 2015, p. 395), thus "forcing them out of movements to which they once dedicated their lives" (Gorski, 2019, p. 668). The best chance we have of *tikkun*

olam (the healing of the world) is if those who are most experienced and connected remain in movement spaces. Activists want this as well. "In every case, they associated support for their well-being, not just to their individual health, but also to the health of their movements" (Gorski & Chen, 2015, p.401) because if one person is suffering and withdraws, it fragments organizations and ecosystems and makes movements less effective (Gorski, 2019, p. 668). For these activists who are doing critical work for the collective, their passion, understanding, and approach is not something they can just turn off (Gorski, 2019, p. 676); in fact, to be successful in their goals, it is something others would need to turn on.

What would it look like to have a truly liberated zone (People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, 2022) and be able to have a space where all those pulling together could speak openly about the stressors of the work, the desire to keep going, and the need for balance? Somatic practitioner and anti-racist clinician Resmaa Menakem (2021) says, "Healing happens when the energy in our nervous systems is able to flow and complete the threat response cycle and return to at-ease" and for those whose work "basically asks people to be in pain and it asks people to acknowledge the pain of others" while mitigating "the human isolation [of] having to be the one naming things" (Gorski, 2019, p. 676), the process of completing the cycle over and over will take time and guidance.

Since those closest to the problem are often best positioned to know the solution, there are some offerings from the field. In order to maintain intact, the fabric of social justice spaces, the recommendation is to begin with "examining cultures within racial justice activist spaces, attending to the threat of burnout as part of activism rather than as something activists pursue outside activism" (Gorski, 2019, p. 682). Gorski and Chen offer three recommendations from their study and its participants:

(1) "Help overcoming the culture of self-lessness and spaces where they could discuss their experiences with activist burnout openly " (Gorski & Chen, 2015, p.402-3) -- not just a matter of activists attending to their "individual needs, but

rather of movement leaders attending to the activist community's needs" (Gorski, 2019, p. 682);

(2) To openly discuss the symptoms and causes of burnout, particularly as they affect people with subjugated identities who are often oppressed within the very movements in which they participate where they are striving to build systems and processes that honor their humanity (Gorski & Chen, 2015, p.402).

(3) "Activist self-care or community-care workshops, or other forums that could begin to shift the culture within social justice education organizations and movements toward one that helps to sustain activists and, as a result, sustains movements," (Gorski & Chen, 2015, p.403).

While building movement-wide capacity for more openness, it may help to express gratitude for the supports that are already in place--"supportive home environments [and] small networks of other activists who were supportive in informal ways" (Gorski & Chen, 2015, p. 399). It also may help to re-center activist heroes who promote collaboration, humility, rest, and spiritual practice, not just for bumper stickers, but for modeling--such as Audre Lorde who described self care as revolutionary and Angela Davis who began a yoga practice while in prison. Finally, beyond the pressures related to activism, many activists of color commented that much of the strain they experience is a result of racial battle fatigue or "the accumulative effect of racism people of colour experience in their everyday lives," (Gorski, 2019, p. 682) demonstrating, again, just how critical their work and their health are, particularly within the educational settings being discussed here.

Group Spaces of Healing

There is still a great deal of stigma around reaching for psychological help. Bion's observation is still true today: "Society, like the individual, may not want to deal with its distresses by psychological means until driven to do so by a realization that some at least of these distresses are psychological in origin" (Bion, 1961, p. 22). While this is true of society in general, it is especially true in communities of color (Williams, 2011), where deficit model pathologizing by clinicians and abuses by the medical community run rampant. Yet learning how we each work and how to work healthfully together in groups is critical. In describing group behavior in a therapeutic environment, Bion states: "The therapy of individuals assembled in groups is usually in the nature of explanation of neurotic trouble, with reassurance; and sometimes it turns mainly on the catharsis of public confession" (Bion, 1961, p. 11). Once the group has been established and in order to be successful in its aim, "Neurosis needs to be displayed as a danger to the group...throw[ing] into prominence the way in which neurotic behaviour adds to the difficulties of the community, destroying happiness and efficiency" (Bion, 1961, p. 13-14). From there, deactivating this danger and teasing it apart becomes a common goal.

Another element that is critical is that the historical and contemporary sociocultural power differentials that exist need to be named within the group. Contemplating the partnership between Harry Stack Sullivan and Ralph Ellison, there is hope in their approach: "As a White man in a racist society, Sullivan's ability to mentalize and hold a safe space for Ellison allowed him to build trust and connect, and through that connection, mutually enrich one another" (Gaztambide, 2021, pp. 95). Often, white folks, who do not typically hold a collective identity, do not see themselves as part of a group and do not realize that trust has been broken again and again, generation to generation, whereas Black people and other people of color hold "the collective unconscious store of transgenerational traumas and defensive directives that manifests in an enduring sense of moral injury" (Stoute, 2021, p. 270). Even given this, or

perhaps because of it, people "sacrifice their individual interests or positive self-views to help or benefit the group" (Ellemers, 2010, p. 798). This is very akin to Menakem's (2022) concept of racial caping whereby people of color protect white people from their own pain by standing in their place and experiencing it. If clinicians name the identity-based power first, demonstrating a belief in the group's abilities (or their capacity to develop their abilities) to labor through their particular work to do within a group setting will serve to empower them.

What does the theological literature have to say about my research issue?

Prophets

For many Jewish people, the word prophet evokes a visceral memory of the liturgy of the High Holy Days. We find these words in Isaiah 58: 5-6 (The Jewish Publication Society, 1985):

> Is such the fast I desire,
> A day for men to starve their bodies?
> Is it bowing the head like a bulrush
> And lying in sackcloth and ashes?
> Do you call that a fast,
> A day when the LORD is favorable?
> No, this is the fast I desire:
> To unlock fetters of wickedness,
> And untie the cords of the yoke
> To let the oppressed go free;
> To break off every yoke.

What Gd wants is liberation, fairness, and honoring the spirit and the letter of His laws. It is the role of the prophet to proclaim and re-proclaim these truths independent of the cost. The prophets of the Tanakh (the Hebrew Bible) "were often loners who railed against the sorry state of the world. They walked closely with God, listened to His truth, and spoke out as a piercing voice in opposition to mainstream culture, often to deaf and obstinate ears" (Olagoke, 2021, p.

95). For the DEI practitioner, this can feel quite resonant. Gorski and Chen describe the research of Maslach and Gomes who wrote that the very nature of the social justice education activist "involves cultivating and maintaining awareness of large and overwhelming social problems, often carrying a burden of knowledge that society as a whole is unable or unwilling to face" (2015, p. 389). One racial justice activist who was interviewed about burnout said, "There is something in me that can't let injustice live...I was put here on this planet to do exactly what I'm doing" (Gorski, 2019, p. 676). DEI practitioners take the knowledge of structural and societal oppression into their hearts, while continuing to hold hope that change is possible and, in educational settings, take on the work of educating and protecting our youth. For many, this is a calling.

Liberation

"Cesaire taught that decolonization and liberation were not automatic historically ordained processes. 'It is always the result of a struggle, the result of strenuous efforts…'" (Gaztambide, 2021). These efforts must be collectively undertaken in order for us to be free. As the Aboriginal proverb asserts, "If you have come to help me you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together." We are interconnected, incapable of living without one another.

From what is it that we seek liberation, then, that impacts us all? From the hierarchy, the cycle of oppression and advantage where "members of advantaged groups are motivated to protect and maintain their privileged position, as members of disadvantaged groups strive for the improvement of their group's position and social standing" (Ellemers, 2010). People of color seek liberation from, as Fanon puts it, "the profound humiliation [we] experience at the hand of the Whiteness, locked into an eternal cycle of shame and self-contempt," and the gaslighting as we are regularly told that "if you are loved, you are told that it is *despite* your color, and if hated, told that it is *not* because of your color" (Gaztambide, 2021, pp. 102-3). We want to release us all from our cultural trauma. Clinician Tada Hozumi (2017) explains that, "Cultural complex

trauma is something we all carry, as colonized, colonizers, and settlers...it refers to trauma that developed because of repeated exposure to pain, often from those with more positional power."

What is possible once we are free from racism? We are available to address other issues that are calling for our attention. The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond asserts that "racism is the single most critical barrier to building effective coalitions for social change" (2022). With human life on our planet in danger of extinction, many are still unwilling to examine how people of color are disproportionately affected and how building cross-racial coalitions is critical to our collective survival. As Lammy and Bapna (2021) explained, "We cannot remain color-blind in our response to the climate crisis." The success of racial and social justice initiatives will allow us to be free of the categories that separate and dehumanize us and keep us from fighting for and with each other.

Sweet Honey in the Rock sing in "Ella's Song" (1988), "We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes." And yet we must rest. We must be free to resist, to rest, to renew, and to return to community and resist some more. This is only possible if we lean on the many rather than the few to hold their part. Psychoanalyst Pinkola Estes (2017) states "Ours is not the task of fixing the entire world at once, but to stretch out and mend the part of the world that is in our reach."

Shabbat

Shabbat happens each seventh day of the week and parallels humans' need for rest with that of Gd resting on the seventh day during the creation story. It is often simply referred to as "the day of rest". It is not only a day of personal rest, but rather a day of communal rest. Exodus 20: 10 reads, "You shall not do any work—you, your son or daughter, your male or female slave, or your cattle, or the stranger who is within your settlements" (Shabbat, n.d.)

Alongside the prohibitions for what is not allowed, there are several invitations to honor the 25 hours of Shabbat in specific ways. In contrast to our busy weeks and even in contrast to

our unyielding and urgent work of our liberatory movements, Shabbat is thought of as a time of joy and a time to vision the world yet to come (My Jewish Learning, 2021). Honoring the Sabbath brings with it the potential to shore up hope and to practice collective visioning that might energize the work awaiting in the week to come.

Shabbat is also described as a time where Gd separates the holy from the mundane (Reconstructing Judaism, 2022). What is enhanced on Shabbat are the human connections that we struggle sometimes to sustain, and offers an opportunity to leave to the side everything but that connection. There is holiness in connection with Gd and holiness in connection with others through Gd. Shabbat gifts a chance to remember what all of the struggle toward freedom is about and for whom.

Meaning Making

"What human beings require for survival," asserted Viktor Frank, "even more than adequate food, shelter, and basic necessities, is meaning" (Adler, 2013, p. 169). Sometimes it is challenging to make meaning, or the meaning is disparate and not collective. Given the atrocities we have witnessed in the world, like "the Holocaust, the ultimate indefensible enormity" (Adler, 2013, p. 173), it is impossible for some to make meaning or to find Gd again. For others, they lean more deeply in. According to Doucet & Rovers (2019, p.99), "Current research indicates that spiritual interventions have proven to be helpful in facilitating healing among those who suffer from various forms of trauma." They further distinguish spirituality from religion saying that while religion is a "system of beliefs in a divine or superhuman power, and practices of worship or other rituals directed towards such a power" spirituality is "the presence of a relationship with a Higher Power that affects the way in which one operates in the world" (Doucet & Rovers, 2010, p. 99). What about the way in which we operate in the world could bring more meaning to anti-oppressive work? Perhaps our work could be more meaningful, and

sustainable with accompaniment--be that a Higher Power, inner power, encompassing power, or ancestral power.

There is, of course, an alternative to making meaning that exists beyond deities. In their book entitled *The Book of Joy*, His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu engage in a week of recorded conversations moderated by Douglas Abrams. Regarding spiritual direction, the Dalai Lama contrasts his practice with that of a Christian prayer practice. He said, "For a nontheist like myself, but who is a Buddhist, as soon as I wake up, I remember Buddha's teaching." Focusing on his teachings of compassion, he wishes others well, remembering the interconnectedness of the world and sets the intention to bring meaning to the day. He continues saying, "Meaningful means, if possible, serve and help others. If not possible, then at least not to harm others. That's a meaningful day" (Lama et al., 2016, p. 67).

Witnessing

Philosopher Emanuel Levinas writes that, "Wherever the ravaged face of the [suffering] other lifts itself to ours, even when we ourselves are suffering, the only moral response we can make…is to do all we can to alleviate it" (Adler, 2013, p. 173). To stand in the face of abject pain and offer presence is one of the most challenging of tasks. Most of us run away from pain, even our own. But to stand -- as Gd would and does -- and receive the experience of another is to make possible the transformation of that pain.

In the United States, many residents have done their utmost to avoid that confrontation, generation after generation for almost half a millennium. Sometimes we move right to action, advice giving, reaction, or explanation, however, "When we are crying out, 'Why? Why?' few of us desire a rationale for our anguish. What we really want God to understand is that it hurts" (Adler, 2013, p. 172), and here on earth our fellow human beings are proxy for God. This means that we have the capacity and, if we want to heal injustice, perhaps the obligation, to remain

steady for one another. "And to be present when the sufferer re-achieves relational speech is to be present at the rebirth of redemption" (Adler, 2013, p. 170).

Spirit & Soul

"One of the most calming and powerful actions you can do to intervene in a stormy world is to stand up and show your soul" (Estes, 2017), and the world of educating children and whiteness and restoring justice is incredibly stormy. "In reality," writes abolitionist teacher and writer Bettina Love, "many of these teachers who 'love all children' are deeply entrenched in racism, transphobia, classism, rigid ideas of gender, and Islamophobia. These teachers do not belong in classrooms with dark children or even White children because antidarkness can happen without dark children in the room" (Love, 2020, p. 41). And the impact of their presence in these rooms? Spirit murder. "Spirit murdering within a school context is the denial of inclusion, protection, safety, nurturance, and acceptance because of fixed, yet fluid and moldable, structures of racism" (Love, 2016). As students of color and DEI practitioners grapple with US schools -- "spaces of Whiteness, White rage, and White supremacy, all of which function to terrorize students of color" -- how do they continue to be willing and able to show their souls?

Jon Redekop's healing process uses "cognitive reframing and the application of spiritual disciplines and practices on both individual and collective levels [allowing victims] to construct a new level of reality in order to experience a renewed sense of personal and communal agency" (Doucet & Rovers, 2010, p. 98). This method allows survivors of trauma to see their resilience as "partially being a function of spiritual renewal and transformation" (Doucet & Rovers, 2010, p. 98). The Dalai Lama (2016, p. 17) also believes in the power of reframing and inner resourcing. He says we need to be wary of "the negative tendencies of the mind, emotional reactivity, [and] our inability to appreciate and utilize the resources that exist within us."

Psychologist Ayala Pines (1994) describes burnout as "the end result of a process in which idealistic and highly committed people lose their spirit" (Gorski & Chen, 2015, p. 381). The word *ruach* in Hebrew is translated as breath, wind, or spirit. In the wake of the murders of Eric Garner and George Floyd, both of whom died while being handled by police and saying the words "I can't breathe", it is stunning to imagine those working so hard to eradicate racism that they lose their own breath, their own spirit. The Bishop of the Nap Ministry talks about this wear and tear: "When we keep going, we constantly treat our bodies as if it's a machine where we don't take the time to let our body slow down, we're missing so much." She describes connecting with her ancestors in the spirit world and reclaiming the "dream-space that was stolen from them for centuries…. and gain[ing] reparations for them now" by resting (Hersey, 2021). Estes reminds us that, "Struggling souls catch light from other souls who are fully lit and willing to show it" (Estes, 2017). And that light, that joy we experience, according to the Archbishop Desmond Tutu, allows us to "face suffering in a way that ennobles rather than embitters. We have hardship without becoming hard. We have heartbreak without being broken" (Lama et al., 2016, p. 15), without losing our spirit.

Connection/Love

According to evolutionary psychologist Dr. Robin Dunbar, human beings need three different kinds of connection, which he has depicted as concentric circles--inner, middle, and outer--that roughly correspond to the three dimensions of loneliness--intimate, relational, and collective (Murthy, 2020, p. 218). Through these three levels of relating, we find a sense of belonging in community and, therefore, "experience a sense of collective purpose and identity" (Murthy, 2020, p. 218). As the Dalai Lama says, **"**We are born and die totally dependent on others, and that the independence that we think we experience in between is a myth" (Lama et al., 2016, p. 129). In circumstances of injustice, we can feel angry. Anger can serve as a catalyst for action. Though the expression of anger can be on one's own behalf, "righteous

anger is usually not about oneself [but] about those whom one sees being harmed and whom one wants to help…it is a chosen response … [signaling] one's collective responsibility, and one's feeling of deep, empowering connection" (Lama et al., 2016, p. 109).

The ability to stay connected in the face of injustice rather than simply turn inward, toward oneself or one's own group, is critical to reshaping the world so that we all thrive and "we [do] not have to wait for others to open their hearts to us. By opening our hearts to them, we could feel connected " (Lama et al., 2016, p. 135). Rabbi Toba Spitzer writes about the conflict in Israel/Palestine and proposes a new mitzvah that riffs on *ahavat yisreal* (a love of Israel). *Ahavat yoshei ha'aretz* - love for all of those who dwell in the land-- a term she coined based on her learnings from "Palestinian and Israeli communities…who have taught me what it means to stay in relationship even with supposed "enemies" for the sake of transformation and to not allow oneself to be defined by negating another's reality" (Spitzer, 2022). Leaning deeply into that love evokes the well-known quote by Dr. Cornel West: "Justice is what love looks like in public, just like tenderness is what love feels like in private" (Unitarian Universalist Association, 2015).

Applying this charge to the independent school context, we come to the importance of the power and authority of the DEI practitioner who is tasked with creating a more just environment, which "as any diversity practitioner knows, none of this is possible — or not possible for long — without the complete support of the head of school" (Chapman & Kassen, 2014). In independent schools where the DEI Practitioner specializes to have a deeper analysis of systemic oppression and is responsible for holding and centering equity and the head of school is typically a generalist and must hold multiple competing priorities, it is essential to develop trust and the ability to be lovingly honest.

In addition to holding different community needs, the people in these roles typically hold different identities--woman of color and white male, respectively. "Schools talk about the importance of the relationship between the head of school and the board chair. But they also

need to talk about the all-important relationship between the head and the director of diversity — and how it can best be developed," (Chapman & Kassen, 2014). DEI practitioner Chapman and Head of School Kassen developed a story-sharing methodology to deepen relationship and practicing cultural competency skills. "Knowing each other's stories not only helps us to work together well, but also builds trust and encourages us to further develop our intergroup skills," says Chapman (Chapman & Kassen, 2014). Kassen states that as director, this process has led him to "look to my partnership with our director of diversity and community to puzzle through emergent issues and, more important, ensure that all decisions we make reflect the school's diversity and social justice missions" (Chapman & Kassen, 2014). This makes for a powerful connection that can create a more just community. As Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. stated: "Power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love" (King, 1967).

Groups

Since the origin of the species, we have needed others to survive. "This relationship with others and with the larger universe is a connection that we all instinctively crave because belonging means more than being accepted, known and loved; it also means sharing in the concerns and responsibility for others" (Murthy, 2020, p. 208). In a society that is stratified by race, "individual and group experiences become components of a social system that bombards people of color daily with evidence of systemic disregard and devaluation of a person or group's humanity in order that another group might assert its privilege and domination" (Stoute, 2021, p. 275). We begin to internalize the message of dominance and subjugation early in life and it plays out in our implicit knowing which is "expressed not so much in what we say but rather in how we behave and feel, in how we carry ourselves, and in what we expect from relationships. This knowing usually exists outside reflective awareness" (Wallin, 2007, p. 118). Working

together as a group to develop language for what we are acting out and learning to be aware of, and eventually, at choice for these relational enactments, has the potential to provide a great deal of healing. Gathering together also has potentially positive outcomes from our multiracial democracy. In discussing de Tocqueville's book *Democracy in America*, founder of the Center of Courage and Renewal, Parker Palmer paraphrased that the democracy of this country "cannot thrive without the pre-political layer of voluntary associations in which people gather in various forms of community…and…people remind themselves of their connectedness with one another and create a million microdemocracies upon which the macro democracy depends" (Murthy, 2020, p. 146).

Beloved Community

Christian Teachings on Beloved Community

Beloved Community was a term coined by theologian Josiah Royce and popularized by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. "King's notion of the Beloved Community rotates around two principal axes: the Beloved Community as an embodiment of agapic love and the Beloved Community as the embodiment of the Moral Laws" (Herstein, 2009, p. 93). He believed in the essential humanity of every individual and he believed in the power of love. He described Agape as "an overflowing love which seeks nothing in return…love in action… seeking to preserve and create community…because creation is so designed that my personality can only be fulfilled in the context of community" (Herstein, 2009, pp. 94-95). He also believed that healing and growth would happen in the community, saying, "All men are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly" (King, 1963). For Royce, loyalty was central to his understanding of beloved community. "This practical devotion to community knows itself to be not merely the love for a local or provincial group…; its mission [is] building a community that is the greatest, most all-encompassing, and

most thoroughly deserving of loyalty that is possible and imaginable" (Herstein, 2009, p. 97). In many ways, King's agape is the equivalent of Royce's loyalty.

Both men believed in something beyond belonging; they believed in the ability of Beloved Community to transform. Royce believed that "the more individuals who joined the effort, the greater the possibility of achieving it [and] that this would lead in time to the radical transformation of individuals" (Strong, 2018). King believed that in order to achieve Beloved Community, there would need "in addition to the radical transformation of individuals, there was a need for a "deep restructuring of institutions if the Beloved Community was to be realized" (Strong, 2018). At this point in the country's history of oppression, most racial justice activists would assert that rather than working on these transformations sequentially, the individual, interpersonal, institutional, and ideological transformations need to be concurrent.

In considering the work in schools, there often emerges a cultural clash between intellectualism and religion. While notions of spirituality or a transcendental artistic experience might be tolerated, the mention of Gd (even in many religious schools) can diminish the seriousness with which the speaker is understood. Given that the benefit of a justice centered, love centered approach to sustaining DEI practitioners appears so deeply needed, Royce's loophole may be needed and serviceable. He says, "if there is a divine element to reality, then that divine element will be a member of that community. If not, there is still that superhuman source of love and loyalty, which binds the community into a whole and flows through the individual "as from above" (Herstein, 2009, p. 99-100).

Strong warns of moving too far in a secular direction. Perhaps it is no surprise that activists are experiencing burnout given the disconnect between what they are building and a Gd. She writes that many activists are realizing, **"**There is something missing in the struggle for justice and human rights. We have replaced a larger vision of Beloved Community …[so] we have lost our connection to spirituality... being connected to something greater than ourselves" (Strong, 2018).

Christian Teachings on Koinonia

Koinonia is a word with Greek roots and is often translated as "partnership". Idialu, of the Methodist Theological Institute, describes that it is meant to be lived out both horizontally--between the church and Christ--and vertically-- among believers in Christ (Idialu, 2022). He suggests that the word contains four central components, the former of which center sharing among a group and the latter of which center sharing with one another. The components are: community relationship, partnership, communion, and sharing material possessions. Using exegesis, Executive Director of Global Witness, Jay Matenga defines *Koinonia* as: a reciprocal relationship connection between persons – their mutual communication, communion, and collaboration…[signifying] interdependent participation and sharing for common wellbeing (Matenga, 2021).

While Koinonia does not explicitly highlight justice or the moral compass to which beloved community refers Idialu, in applying the concept to addressing post-colonial Nigeria, speaks to how the leaning into "genuine partnership, unalloyed communion with one another, and sharing of both national and personal resources" could bolster sustainability "in a world that grapples with the troubles of colonialism [and] unbiased community relationship" (Idialu, 2022).

Jewish Teachings on Beloved Community (Kehila Kedosha)

The phrase *Kehila Kedosha* is often translated as beloved or sacred community. According to the Talmud (Sanhedrin 17b 0), a Jewish community requires the following 10 things: a beit din (law court)...; a tzedakah * fund that is collected by two people and distributed by three; a synagogue; a bath house (mikveh *); a bathroom; a doctor; a craftsperson; a blood-letter; (some versions add: a butcher; and a teacher of children)" (Jacobs, 2019). So, in order to be a community, there need to be: boundaries and consequences; access to financial resources, with fair reasoning about distribution; a place to bring the community together; resources to practice good health and hygiene; a creative; food supply; and education.

Naturally, communities differ across location, size, wealth, and composition, but what has remained constant is "membership in a Jewish community has always demanded a sense of shared destiny, manifested in the obligation to care for other members of the community, as well as in the joy of partaking in others celebrations" (Jacobs, 2019). The care and joy and interconnectedness is what, in part, makes community sacred.

In addition to care, Judaism offers moral guidance on how we are to treat one another. Pirkei Avot alerts us that we all must participate in the solution: "It is not your duty to finish the work, but neither are you at liberty to neglect it" (Pirkei Avot 2:16); "Do not distance yourself from the community" (Pirkei Avot, 2:4)"; and "*Tzedek Tzedek Tirdof* "--justice, justice you shall pursue (Parashat Shoftim). From Hillel we learn that we need to keep balance in our pursuit of justice: "If I am not for myself, who will be for me. If not now when?" (Pirkei Avot 1:14). We are neither abandoning ourselves for the other, nor the other for ourselves. Finally, we learn that while productive conflict is good -- *Machloket l'shem hashamayim*-- we always come back to love --*v'ahavta l'reacha kamocha*- love your neighbor as yourself (Lev 19:18). The pursuit of justice in educational settings is a marathon. It requires nuance and solidarity with others. The lessons from Judaism are meditations on collaborating with others, staying motivated, coming from a place of love.

Secular Teachings

"I put my hand in yours and together we can do what we could never do alone," begins the first line of the official prayer for Overeaters Anonymous (1968). When we experience emotional pain, as we do in a society with oppression, there can be anger: "anger… is a fear that we will not get what we need, that we are not loved, that we are not respected, that we will not be included" (Lama et al., 2016, p. 107). Looking at the Overeaters Anonymous (OA) prayer, we are reminded that there is so much we can do if we do not try to go it alone. Once we develop trust in one another, by simply showing "your genuine sense of concern for their well-being" (Lama et al., 2016, p. 75), we are ready to move forward together.

Programs like OA, Alcoholics Anonymous, Debtors Anonymous, and other 12-step programs provide a spiritual path to reclaiming one's life in community. The *Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous* reads, "Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us" (Alcoholics Anonymous, 2022, p. 77). The book's chapter entitled "A Vision for You" closes with: "We shall be with you in the Fellowship of the Spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy Destiny. May God bless you and keep you-until then" (Alcoholics Anonymous, 2022).

The principles offered by twelve step programs seem a natural fit for the transformational process to which DEI practitioners are devoted. Imagining a group of practitioners coming together to let go of what they so often carry, to help them make meaning, and to build on positive group relations. Meeting consistently in a group does require, however, the willingness to slow down, put oneself first and allow oneself to be seen and to witness others.

Wholeness

The word for whole in Hebrew (shalom) is related to the word for peace (shalem); they share a linguistic root. The optimal outcome of this work is to restore wholeness--individually, spiritually and communally. Jung explains wholeness as "a universal human urge or desire to fulfill all of oneself--all of one's potentials, all the aspects of ourselves as they have come into being or failed to come into being in our particular environmental circumstances" (Kalsched, 2013, p165) Parker Palmer (2009, pp. 117-118) indicates that the path to wholeness and peace is within ourselves. As pastoral counselors our role is presence. He writes:

> When you speak to me about your deepest questions, you do not want to be fixed or saved: you want to be seen and heard, to have your truth acknowledged and honored. If your problem is soul-deep, your soul alone knows what you need to do about it, and my presumptuous advice will only drive your soul back into the woods. So, the best service I can render when you speak to me about such a

> struggle is to hold you faithfully in a space where you can listen to your inner teacher (Palmer, 2009, p. 117-118).

Wholeness comes in listening to the inner, ancestral and enduring wisdom Self, through our--Clarity, Confidence, Creativity, Curiosity, Compassion Courage, and Connection (Schwartz, 2021, p. 6)., to each of our Selfs and all of our Selfs.

Methodology

Overview of Design

The questions presented by this research were: to what extent the access to and engagement in a Beloved Community can stave off burnout in and serve to sustain DEI Practitioners of Color in Independent schools; and what, if any, distinctions can be made about the experience of the role based on other identity markers. Using grounded theory, participants will complete a 20-minute, 30 question multiple choice survey. Respondents shared demographic information, information about their state of mind, their spiritual and religious practices and beliefs, their level of engagement and expertise in racial and social justice activism, and the profile and activities of their school.

Procedure Used

Respondents were DEI leaders at independent schools within the United States of America with membership at NAIS. Recruitment messages will be sent out via four Facebook Groups--POCC Withdrawal, Latinas Completing Doctorates, Latinx Educators in Independent Schools, and POCIS NY; one listserv--NYSAIS DEI practitioners in independent schools; and to several personal and professional contacts who may complete and/or share with others who meet the qualifications. The survey was constructed via Google Forms and responses were collected throughout the month of August 2022, after which time, results were exported to Excel for analysis in JMP.

Although no compensation was offered, all participants may opt-in to a drawing. Four

randomly selected winners received a $30 gift card to Café con Leche Books to incentivize participation.

Beloved Community Scores

For the purposes of this study, the operational definition of "beloved community" is a community described as "inclusive and interrelated based on love, justice, compassion, responsibility, shared power and a respect for all people, places, and things, that radically transforms individuals and restructures institutions" (Strong, 2018). Respondents were asked to indicate their belonging to such a community (survey question 24) as well as the desire to belong to such a community (survey question 28).

Sum Scores Indicating Burnout

In order to ascertain the level of burnout professionals were experiencing, a sum score was used based on a frequency scale in response to a selected subset of questions 25, 26, and 27, which asked about experiences, feelings and working respectively. These included the frequency with which respondents experienced:

- "so much work stress that I have considered stepping back from activism or reducing your level of engagement"; "work as too much, too soon, too fast, or too long, coupled with not enough of something reparative"; "insomnia, emotional exhaustion, depression, fatigue or feeling frayed in a way that is directly tied to activism";
- "feelings of disillusionment or hopelessness or a shifting attitude or disposition toward social justice education activism"; and "trouble eating, ongoing fatigue, unhealthy eating, or health problems directly related to activism." It also includes feelings like: "losing my spirit as a result of my social justice work" and feeling "overwhelmed by the enormity of the sociopolitical conditions, feelings of not doing enough, or feeling like not enough has been accomplished"; and
- work that "forced [them] to disengage from activist activities, even temporarily due to emotional exhaustion, physical exhaustion, cynicism or hopelessness".

These burnout sum scores were used throughout the statistical analysis.

Of the 29 respondents, 28 completed all of the questions related to rates of burnout. The maximum possible score for these questions, using a scale of 0 (never) to 4 (always), was 32, with a low score of 6 and a high score of 27. The respondent who completed five of the eight questions relating to the burnout indicator has a total score of 9. The scores were assigned the following ranges: not experiencing burnout, 0-7; experiencing mild burnout, 8-15; experiencing moderate burnout, 16-24; experiencing severe burnout, 25-29; and experiencing extreme burnout 30-32.

Support and Opposition Scores

Where support and opposition scores were calculated by constituency, those that were ranked at top priority received a 4; those that received second priority score received a 3, those that received third priority score received a 2, and those that received fourth priority score received a 1. After completing a group tally for each constituency for each respondent, a mean was established for each constituency. That is what is represented.

Scores for total support and total opposition were calculated by totaling the ranked scores for each constituency. The sum was used for each respondent in conjunction with the burnout score to create a regression analysis in order to explore their relationships to one another.

Results

Personal Facts and Demographics

The survey was completed by 29 individuals who self-identified as DEI practitioners in Independent Schools. As illustrated in Figure 2, nine people (31%) identified as being assigned female at birth and 20 people (69%) identified as assigned male at birth. As illustrated in Figure 3, respondents identified their current gender identity as follows: nine (9) respondents identified

as male (31%)[1]; 17 as female (59%), and two (7%) as non-binary. One person (3%) declined to share their gender identity.

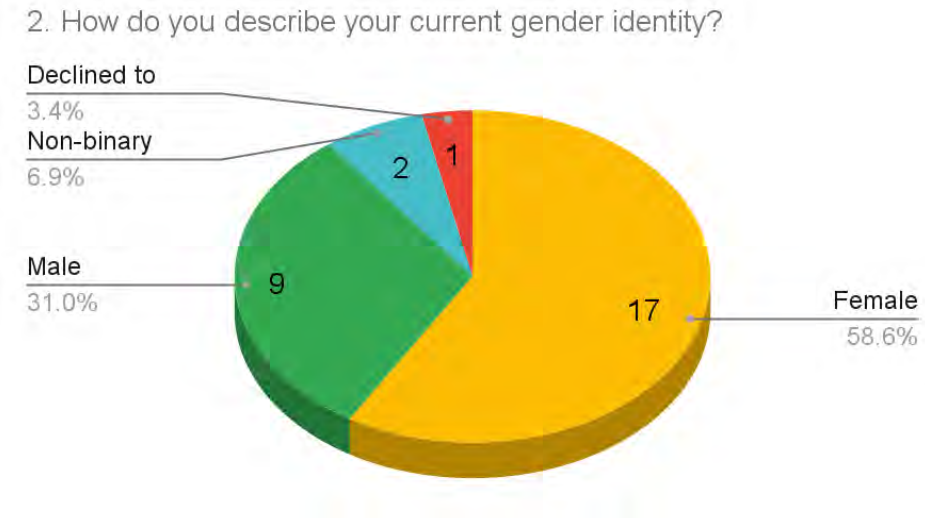
Figure 2

Responses Regarding Sex Assigned at Birth

[1] Total percentage may exceed 100% due to rounding.

Figure 3

Responses Regarding Current Gender Identity



All 29 participants responded to the question of racial-ethnic identity. Figure 4 illustrates that five (17%) respondents selected "white, of European descent"; two (7%) selected "Asian"; twenty-one (72%) selected "Black"; five (17%) selected Latinx/Hispanic; and two (7%) selected "something else" and none (0%) selected indigenous. Six (21%) of the respondents selected more than one category, resulting in a total number of racial and ethnic identities exceeding the number of respondents.

Figure 4

Responses Regarding Racial and Ethnic Identity

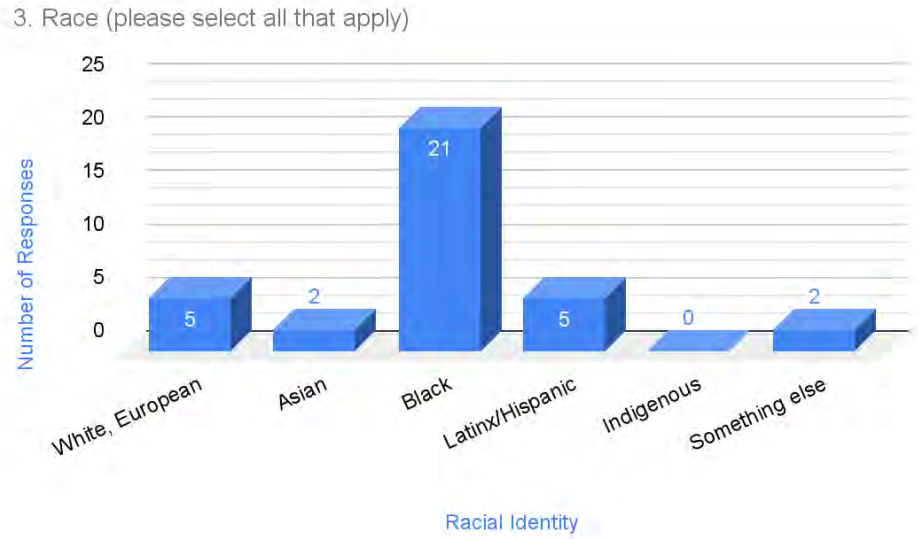


Figure 5 demonstrates the response to racial and ethnic identity based on those who indicated one identity and those who indicated multiple. Looking at racial and ethnic identity from that perspective, six (21%) of the respondents selected more than one category, while the remaining 23 (79%) selected only one racial or ethnic category.

Figure 5

Responses Regarding Racial and Ethnic Identity

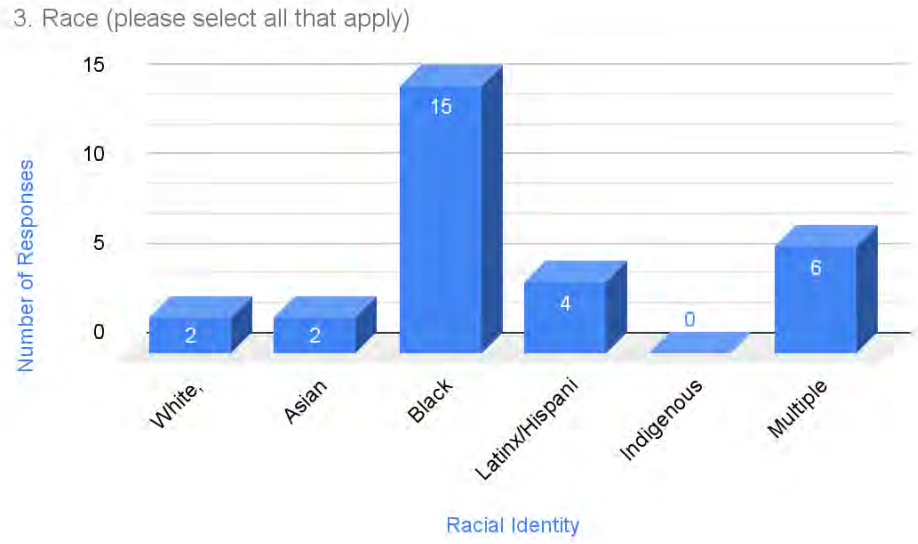


Figure 6 illustrates that nearly a third of the respondents are new to the role of DEI practitioner--1 (4%) less than one year; 8 (29%) fewer than four years; less than a third are established in the role -- two (7%) 4-6 years and six (21%) 7-9 years; and that a large percentage are seasoned in the role---for four (14%) serving 10-14 years and seven (25%) serving more than 16 years in the role.

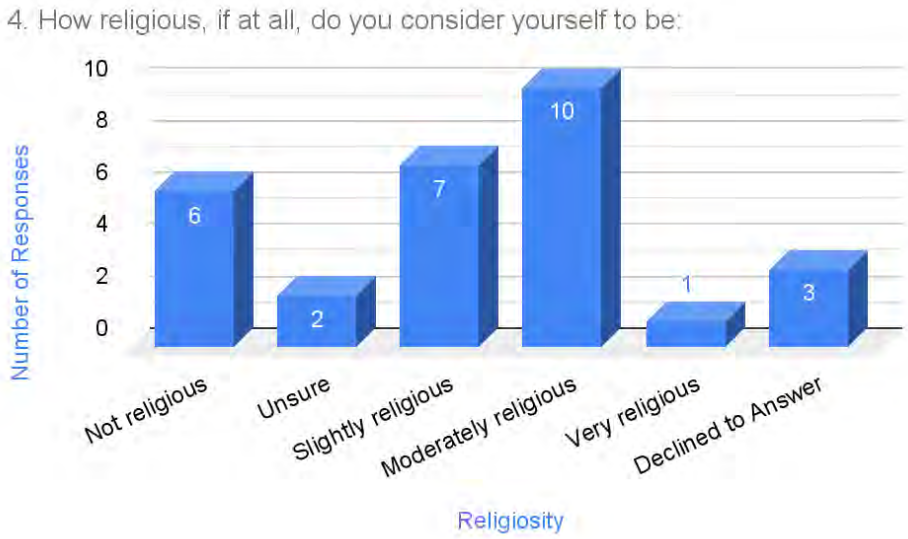
Figure 6

Years as a DEI Practitioner

Respondents expressed a range of identity regarding religiosity, as illustrated in Figure 7. Respondents indicated that: two (7%) were unsure; six (21%); were not religious; seven (24% were slightly religious; 10 (34%) were moderately religious; one (3%) was very religious; and three (10%) declined to answer.

Figure 7

Religiosity of DEI Practitioners



Respondents expressed a range of identity regarding spirituality, with nearly a vast majority (89%) identifying as spiritual, one respondent declining to answer, and no respondents indicating they were unsure of their spiritual identity. As illustrated in Figure 8, respondents indicated they were: two (7%) not spiritual; two (7%) slightly spiritual; 10 (34%) moderately spiritual; and 14 (48%) very spiritual.

Figure 8

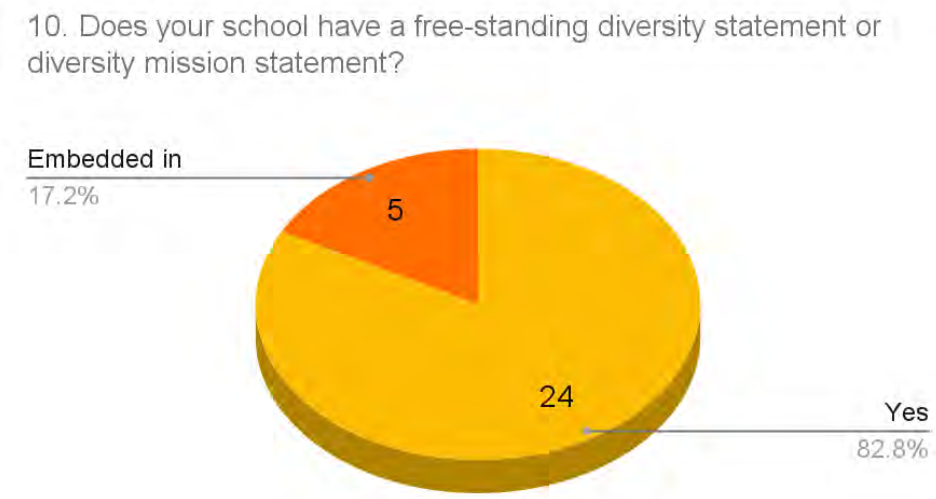
Responses Regarding Spirituality Identity

Organizational Facts and Demographics

When asked whether their schools had yet to develop a Diversity Statement, were in the process of developing a diversity statement, already had a free-standing diversity statement, or whether their schools' diversity commitments were embedded into the language of the schools' mission statements, 24 (82%) indicated a free standing Diversity Statement and five (17%) said the language was embedded in the school's mission statement. This is illustrated in Figure 9.

Figure 9

School's Diversity Statement Status



Among the 27 respondents who provided the title under which they were doing their work as DEI practitioners, there were 24 unique job titles. Three job titles included two instances each: Head of School (2), Director of Equity and Inclusion (2) and Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (2), as illustrated in Figure 10. Of these 27 professionals: two (7%) reported to the Board of Trustees; 18 (67%) to the Head of School; 4 to the Division Head (15%); two to the Director of Diversity (7%); and one (4%) to the Director of Admissions. This is illustrated in Figure 11. Figure 12 shows that twenty-eight (28) respondents indicated their position's relationship to the Senior Leadership Team of their school, with 21 (75%) of those responding being on the team and seven (25%) not being on the team.

Figure 10

School's Diversity Statement Status

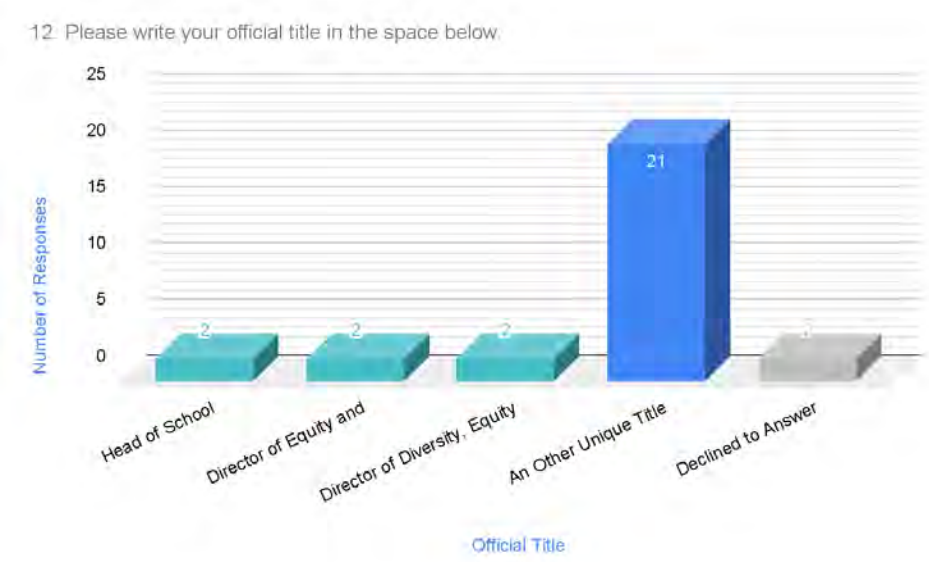


Figure 11

Practitioners' Direct Supervisor

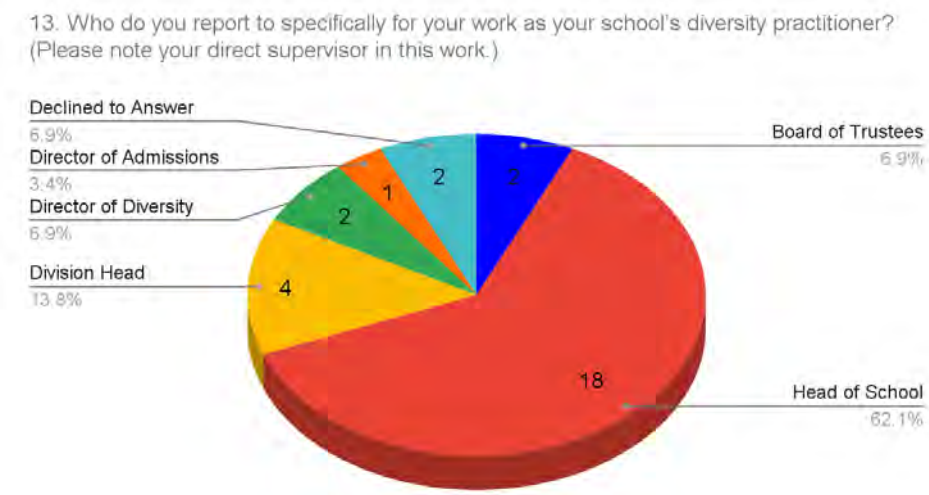
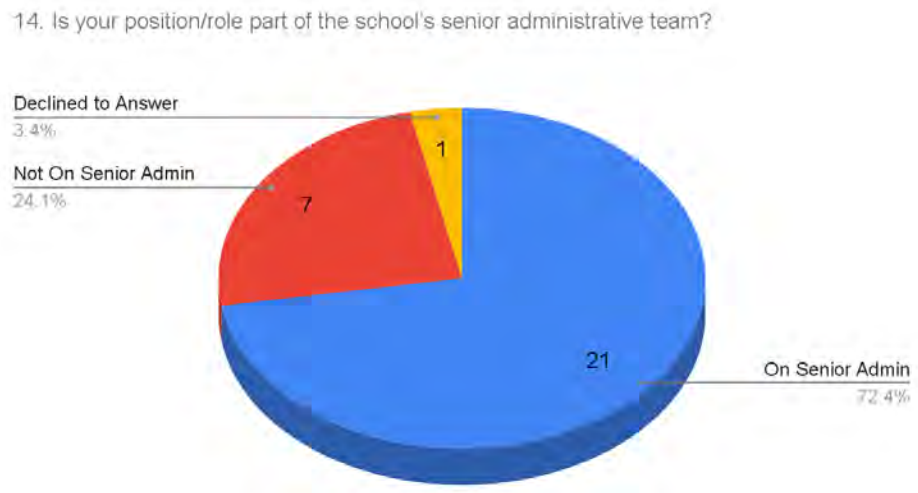


Figure 12

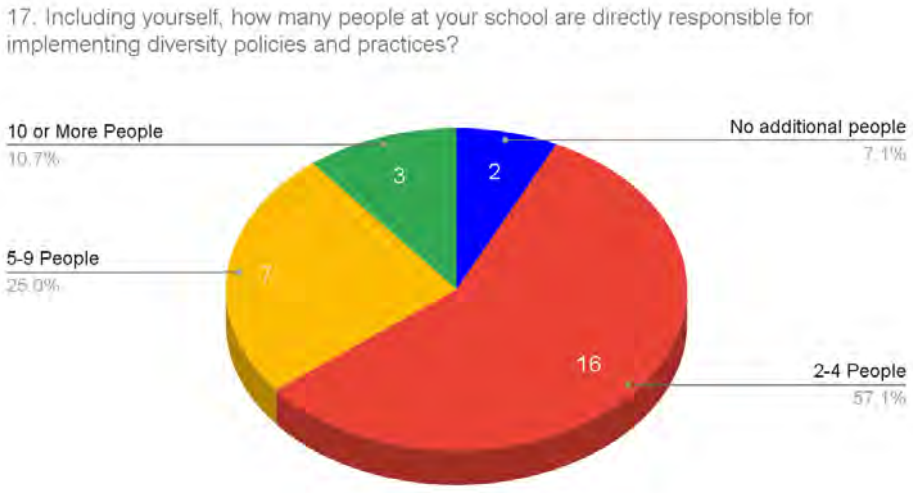
Practitioners' Membership on the Senior Leadership Team



Twenty-six respondents, the vast majority (93%), indicated that multiple people at their school are directly responsible for implementing policies and procedures regarding diversity. In 16 cases (57%), as seen in Figure 13, there are two to four individuals responsible.

Figure 13

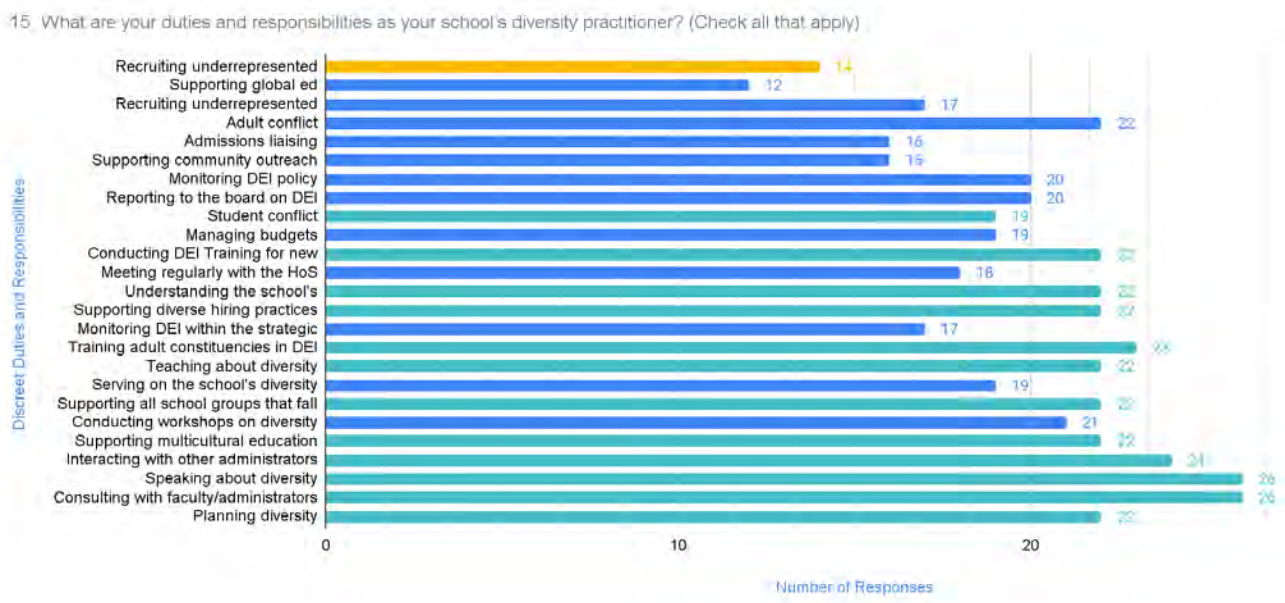
Number of Employees Responsible for Implementing Diversity Policies and Practices



Based on a list of 25 discrete responsibilities generated by NAIS (2019) that typically fall under the job description of a DEI practitioner, the eleven duties which 75% or more of the respondents indicated fall to them within their role, as illustrated in Figure 14, were: speaking about diversity (89.7%); consulting with staff/faculty/admin on diversity related issues (89.7%); interacting with administrators on diversity related issues (82.8); training faculty/parents/students/alumni (79.3%); planning and overseeing diversity programming (75.9%); supporting multicultural education (75.9%); supporting all groups that fall within the diversity umbrella (75.9%); teaching about diversity (75.9%); supporting hiring practices to ensure a diverse workforce (75.9%); understanding the school's curriculum (75.9%); new faculty orientation (75.9%); and conflict intervention/management between staff/faculty (75.9%). Recruitment of students from underrepresented groups was a responsibility for less than half (48%) of respondents.

Figure 14

Responsibilities of the Role



Respondents reported on the constituency from whom they received the most support, as illustrated in Figure 15, and from whom they received the greatest opposition, as illustrated in Figure 16, with zero (0) representing none and four (4) representing a great deal. These figures were averaged by constituency. The range for intensity of support, a mean of 1.714 to 3.296, exceeded the range for intensity of opposition, 0.462 to 1.400, with the greatest support being reported from the Head of School (3.296), students (3.179), and faculty (2.929) and the greatest opposition being reported from families (1.400), trustees (1.115), and faculty (1.038).

Figure 15

Mean Support By Constituency

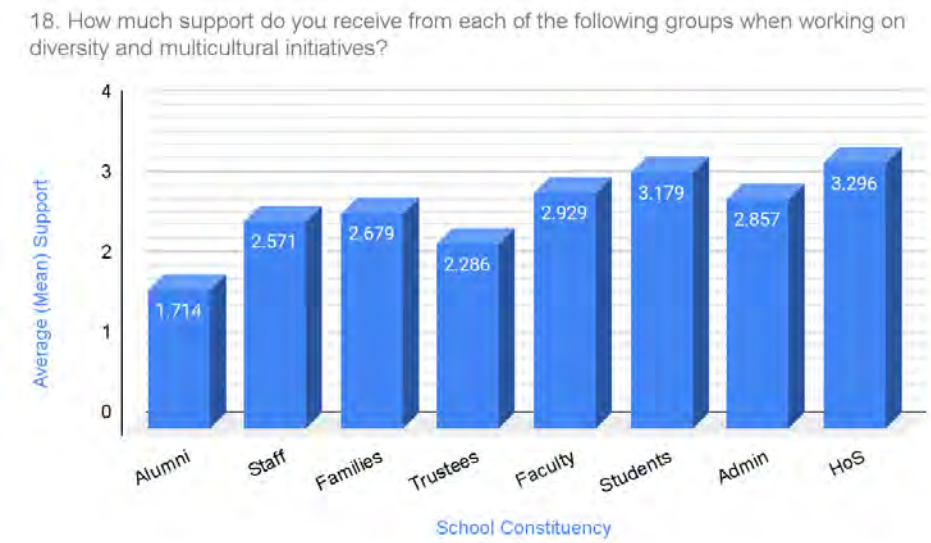
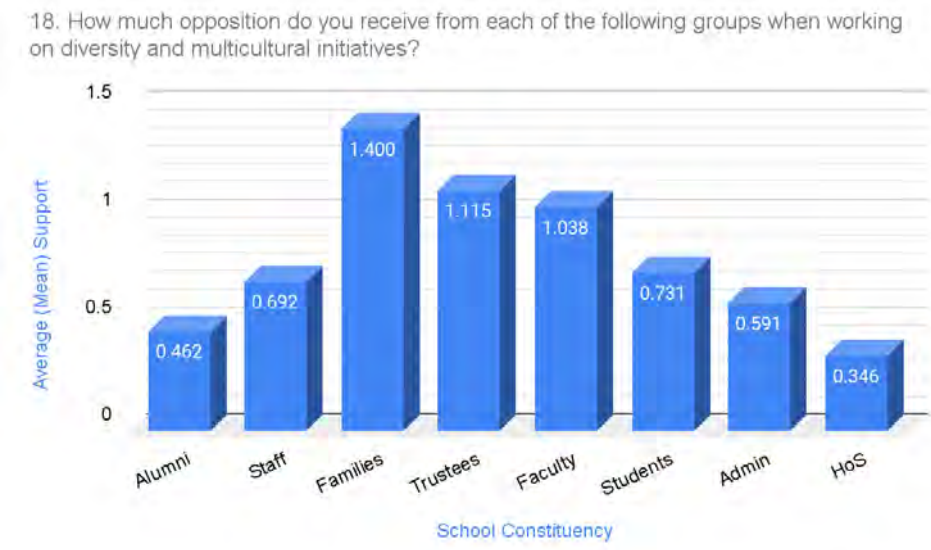


Figure 16

Mean Opposition By Constituency

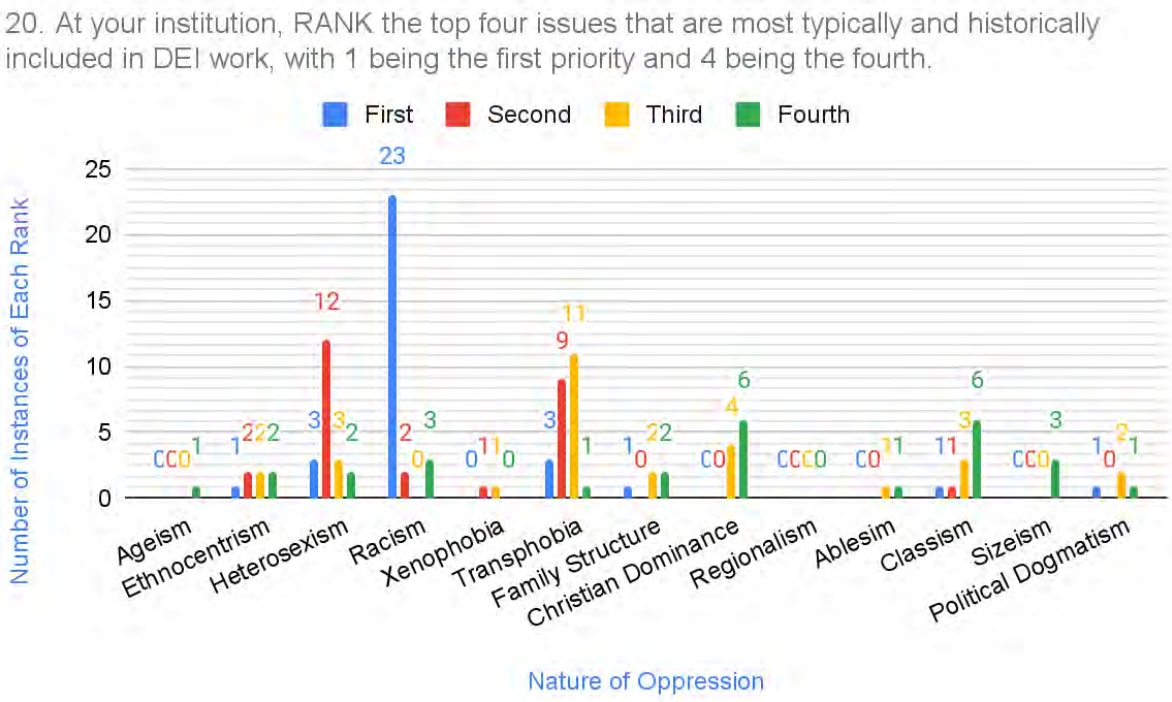


Given the wide array of oppressions and social identifiers under the umbrella DEI work, this question seeks to delineate what was meant by DEI or prioritized within DEI at respondents'

institutions. First priority rankings received four points, second priority items, three points, third priority items, two points and fourth priority items one point. Twenty-three of 31[2] first-priority rankings indicated racism was what has typically and has historically been prioritized. This is illustrated in Figure 17. Exploring these rankings from another perspective, Figure 18 demonstrates the aggregate first, second, third, and fourth place ranking across the six most highly ranked issues, demonstrating that while racism is often a first priority, gender and sexuality are highly centered within anti-oppressive work in respondents' schools.

Figure 17

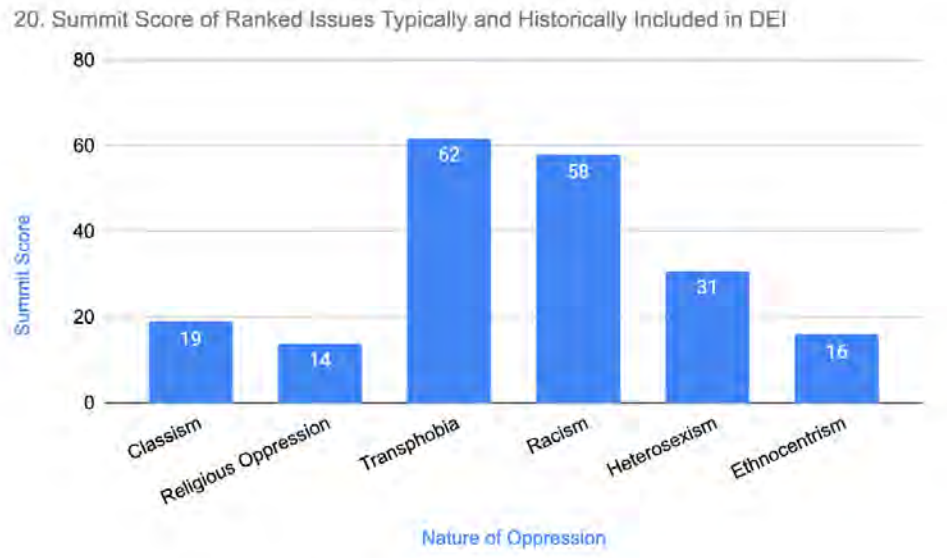
Ranked DEI priorities



[2] Twenty-nine respondents indicated 31 first priorities, resulting in a number in excess of the 29.

Figure 18

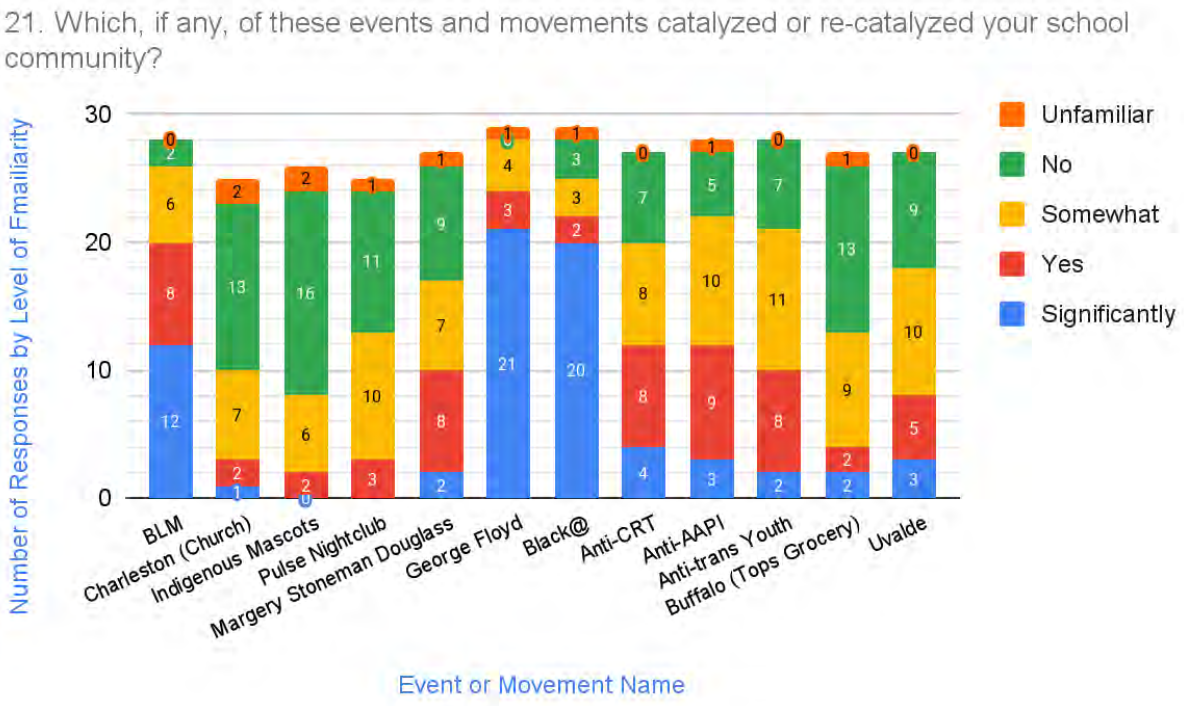
Sum Score for First, Second, Third and Fourth Ranked by Oppression Type



Exploring the relationship between school activism and the faces of oppression, Figure 19 illustrates the schools' responses received as to whether each event or movement (listed in chronological order) catalyzed or re-catalyzed respondents' school communities. The scale includes each instance in which a respondent indicated: I'm unfamiliar with that event; no; somewhat; yes; or yes, significantly. In the case of George Floyd's murder, for example, 21 (75%) of the practitioners indicated it catalyzed the community significantly; three (11%) said it catalyzed the community; four (14%) said it catalyzed the community somewhat; no one (0%) indicated it not having a catalyzing effect on the community; and one person (4%) said they were not familiar with this event.

Figure 19

Stacked Column Chart for Events and Movements that Catalyzed School Activism



Personal Behaviors & Experiences

As illustrated in Figure 20, 90% of DEI practitioners who responded find their work satisfying to some degree, with seven (24%) indicating they find it extremely satisfying, 12 (45%) indicating they find it very satisfying, and six (21%) indicating they find it somewhat satisfying. Additionally, one (3%) indicated they did not find it very satisfying and two (7%) found it not satisfying at all.

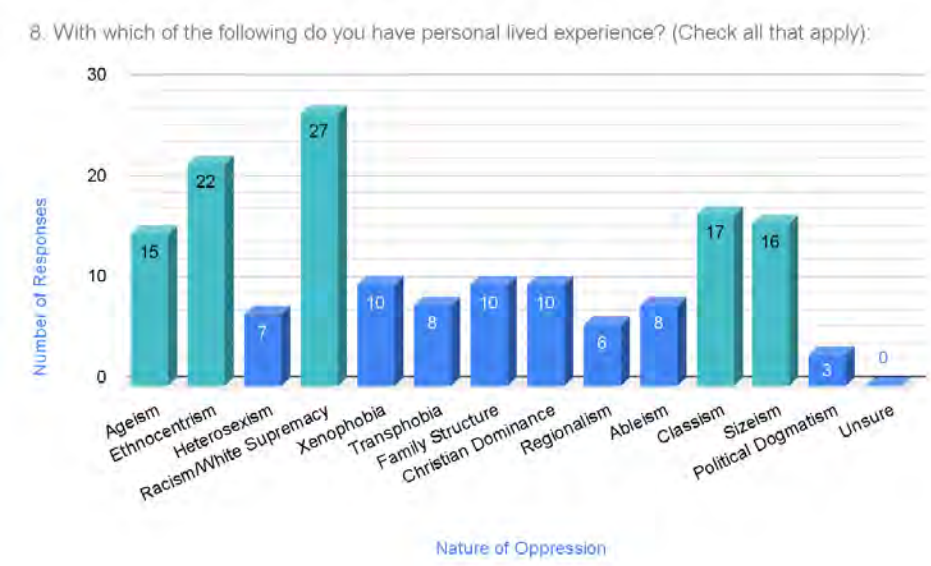
Figure 20

DEI Role Satisfaction

Among the 29 respondents, 159 permutations of identity harm were experienced. Among the most frequently reported were racism/white supremacy by 27 people (93%), ethnocentrism by 22 people (76%), classism by 17 people (59%), sizeism by 16 people (55%), and ageism by 15 people (52%). These experiences are illustrated in Figure 21.

Figure 21

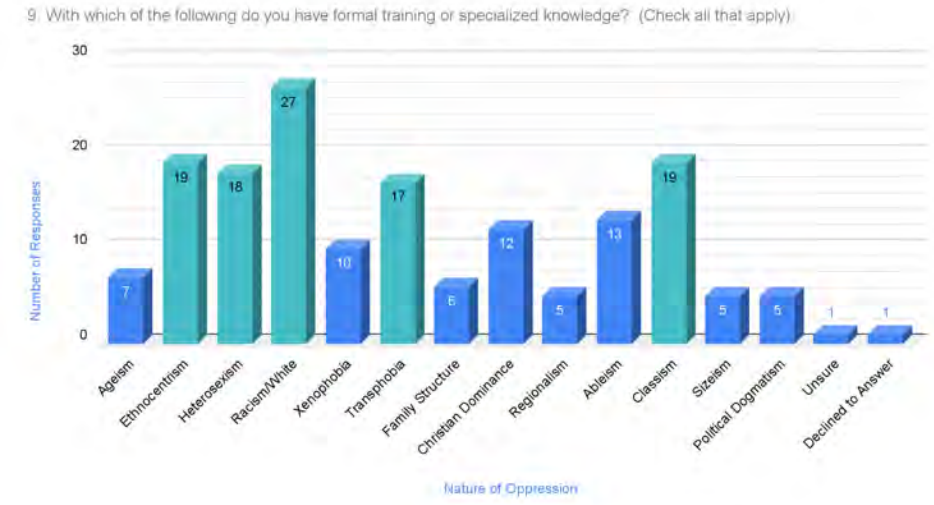
Experiences of Identity Harm



When asked to specify the training they had received or specialized knowledge they had as a DEI practitioner in independent schools, one person declined to answer and one was unsure. Among those who did respond with certainty: all 27 (100%) had received training on racism/white supremacy, and the majority of those respondents had training and knowledge about ethnocentrism 19 (70%), sexual orientation/heterosexism 18 (67%), 17 (63%) transphobia, and class/classism 19 (70%). This is illustrated in Figure 22.

Figure 22

Specialized Training Experiences



When mitigating work stress, there are a variety of strategies and interventions that DEI practitioners use to mitigate work stress. The most frequently occurring are: movement 25 (86%) and talking 25 (86%). This is illustrated in Figure 23. As helpful as talking can be, Figure 24 illustrates that for 20 respondents (69%) the stress can only effectively be processed with less than 10% of their colleagues. Another 7 (24%) say that it is effective with between 10% and 25% of thief colleagues and two (7%) say it's effective with up to 50% of their colleagues. No respondents (0%) indicated between 50- 75% nor 75-100%.

Figure 23

Strategies for Mitigating Work Stress

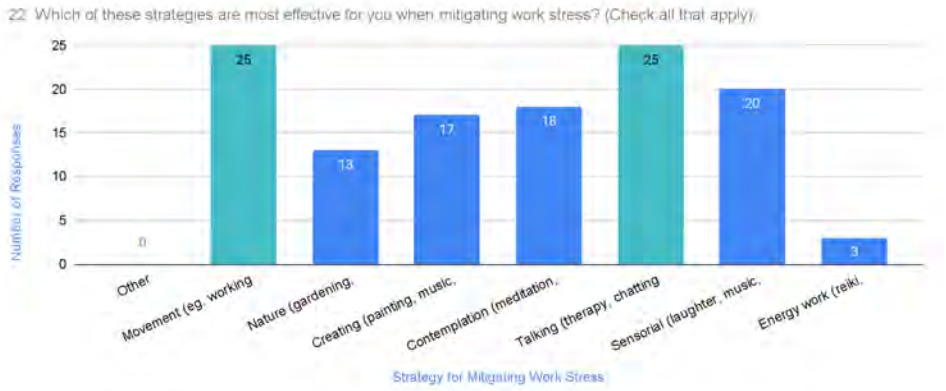
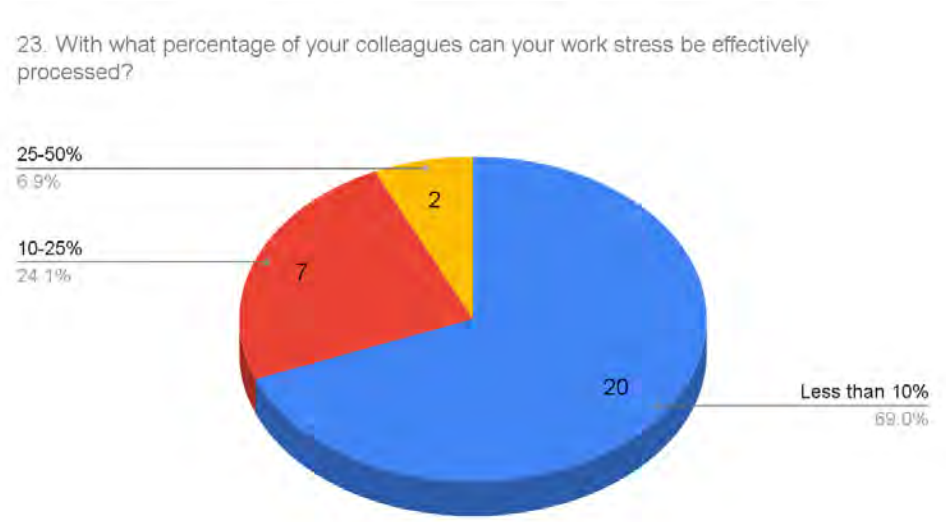


Figure 24

Percentage of Colleagues With Whom Processing Work Stress Is Effective



Turning to resources within or without the school environment, illustrated in Figure 25, more than a third (34%) of respondents indicated belonging to a beloved community, using Strong's (2018) definition, and 7% indicated that they did not. Others indicated having previously belonged to one (26%) or being interested in belonging to one (31%). When asked whether participation in a beloved community would feel supportive, Figure 26 indicates nearly two thirds

of respondents 18 (62%) expressing an enthusiastic yes!; nine (31%) indicated it would feel very supportive, and two (7%) indicated it would feel supportive.

Figure 25

Relationship to Belonging in Beloved Community

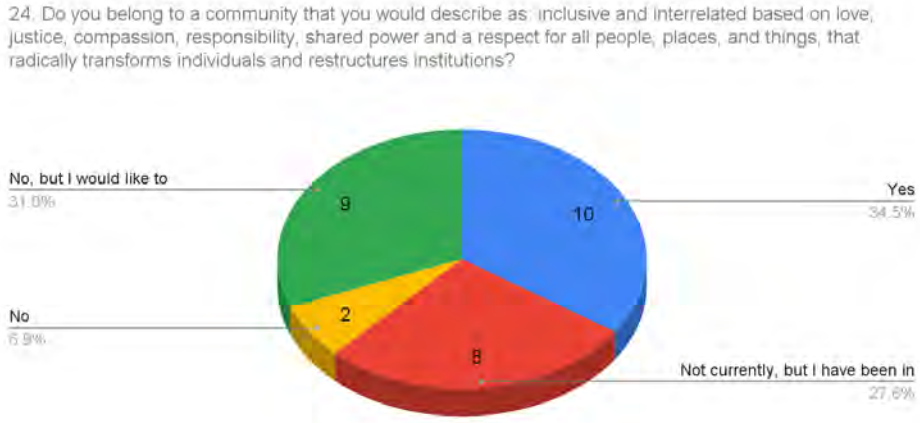
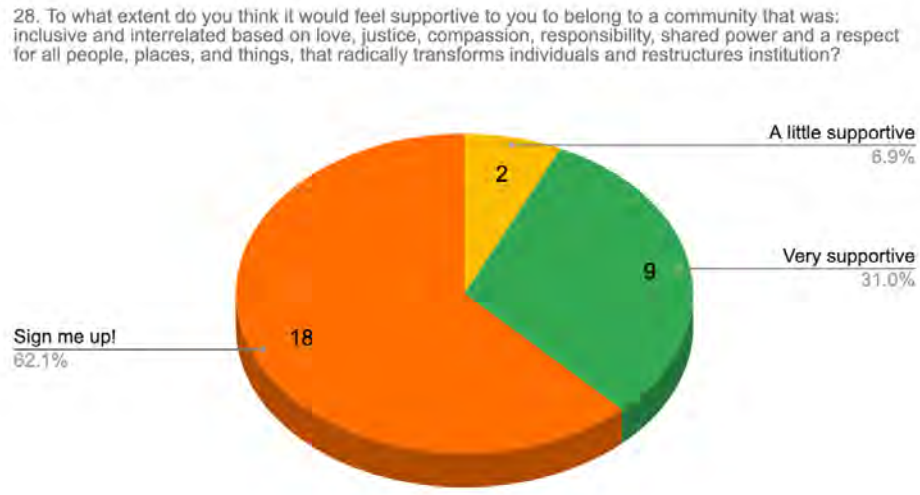


Figure 26

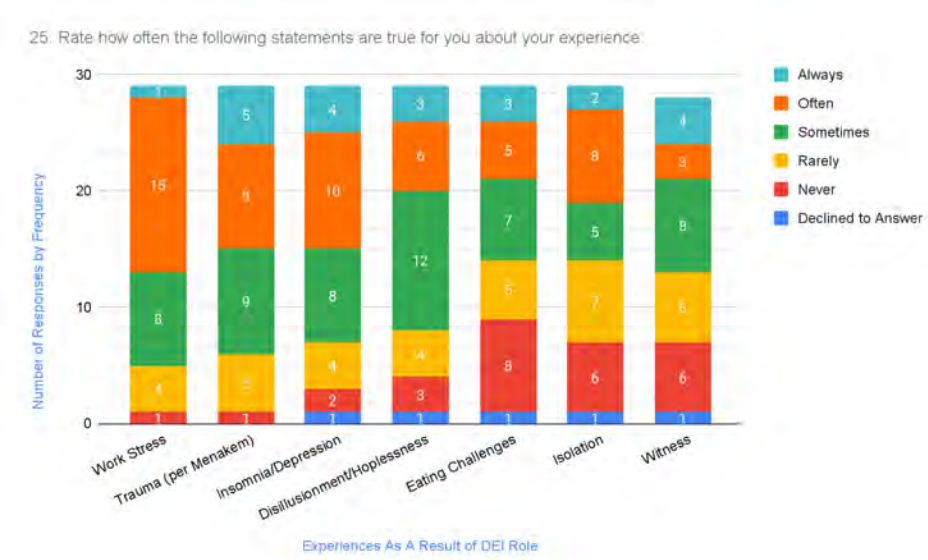
Extent to Which It Would Feel Supportive to Belong to a Beloved Community.



In describing their relationship to their work, at least half of those who responded often or always experience: so much work stress that I have considered stepping back from activism or reducing their level of engagement (55%); their work as too much, too soon, too fast, or too long, coupled with not enough of something reparative, Menakem's (2022) definition of trauma (50%); insomnia, emotional exhaustion, depression, fatigue, or feeling frayed in a way that is directly tied to their activism (50%). This is illustrated in Figure 27.

Figure 27

Work-Related Stressors Experienced



Some of the feelings associated with doing racial justice and social justice education work are: loss of spirit as a result of my social justice work; overwhelm from the enormity of the sociopolitical conditions, feelings of not doing enough, or feeling like not enough has been accomplished; profound personal responsibility for eliminating racism; and feelings of professional vulnerability when bringing up racism. Figure 28 illustrates respondents' relationship to these feelings. The most frequently occurring feelings are those of overwhelm

and a sense that not enough has been accomplished; four respondents (14%) experienced this all the time; 13 (45%) often; five (17%) sometimes, four (14%) rarely, and three (10%) never.

Figure 28

Work-Related Feelings Experienced

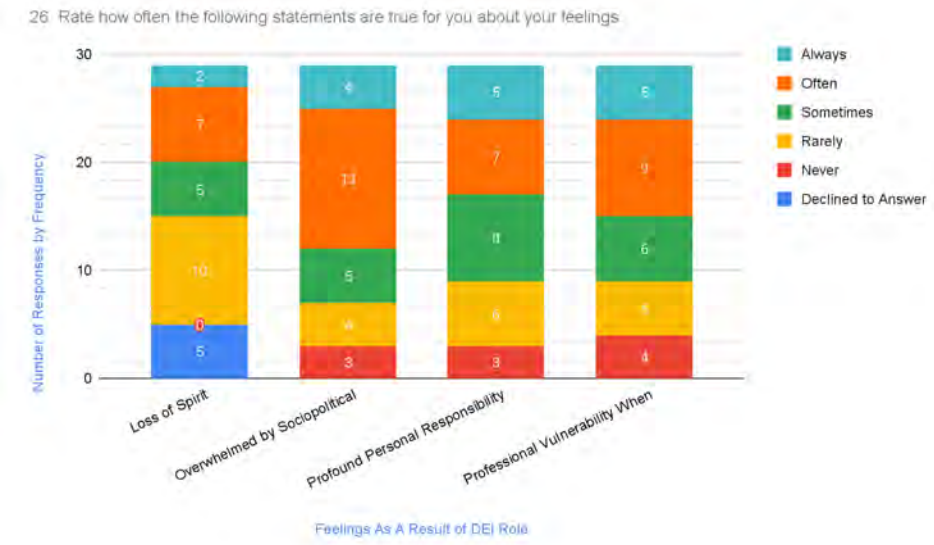
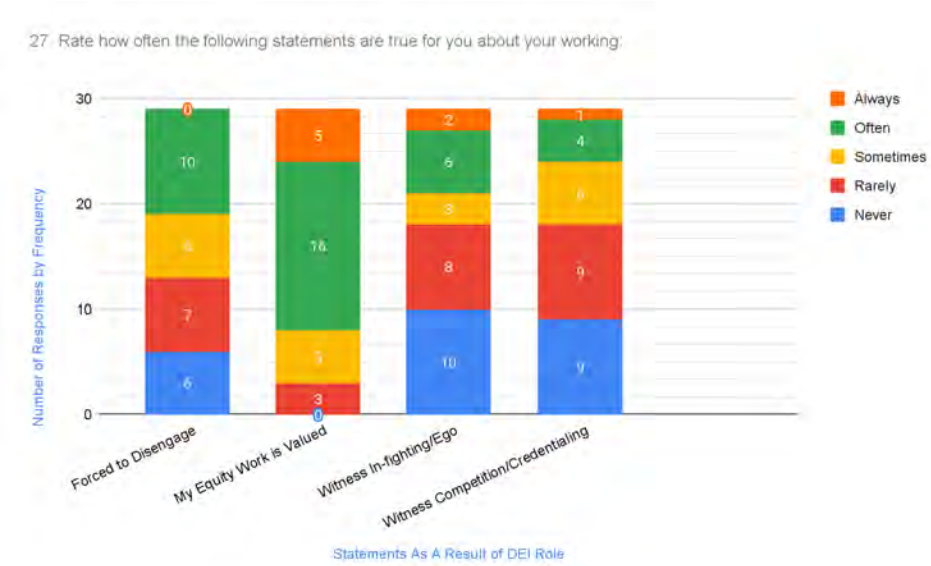


Figure 29 illustrates the internal experiences and experiences witnessed of DEI practitioners. While 23 (55%) of respondents indicated needing to withdraw to some degree from the work for short periods of time due to exhaustion, 21 (72%) reported a continual or frequent assurance that their equity work is valued by their community. Approximately one third do not see the infighting (34%) or competition and credentialing (31%) that can occur among social justice activists (Gorski, 2019, p. 679).

Figure 29

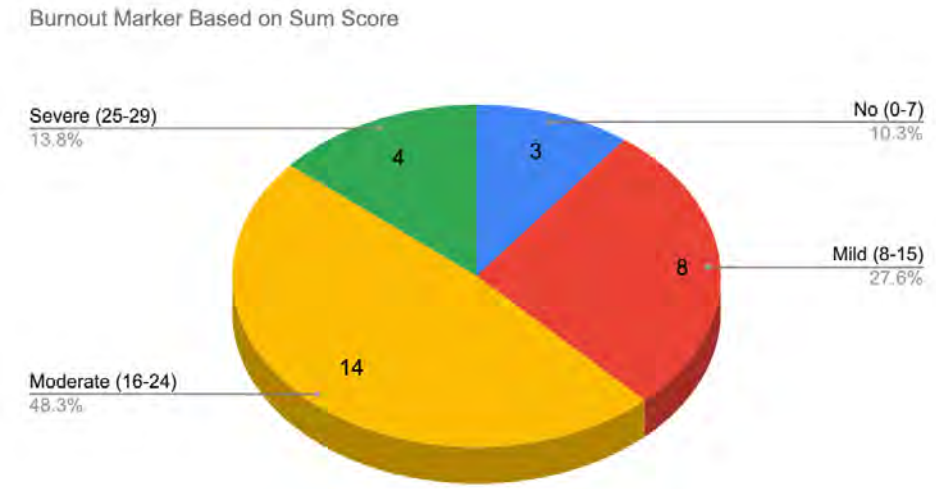
Work-Related Experiences and Witnessing



In order to ascertain the level of burnout professionals were experiencing, a sum score was used based on a frequency scale in response to a selected subset of questions 25 (a, b, c, d, and e), 26 (a and b), and 27 (a). A designation of intensity was assigned based on the following ranges: no burnout (0-7); mild (8-15); moderate burnout (16-24); severe burnout (25-29); and extreme burnout (30-32) burnout shown in Figure 30. Three (10%) respondents experienced no burnout; eight (28%) experienced mild burnout; 14 (48%) experienced moderate burnout; and four (14%) experienced severe burnout.

Figure 30

Incidence of Burnout By Sum Score



Statistical Analysis with Burnout

When seeking to determine the relationship between burnout and belonging to a beloved community, there was a moderately strong negative relationship with a fairly high statistical significance, indicating that belonging to a beloved community corresponds to a reduced rate of burnout. The correlation analysis revealed a correlation of -0.33, with a p value of 0.0880, indicating a confidence interval of 91%. An additional datum demonstrated a small negative correlation effect between longevity in the role of DEI practitioner and burnout, which suggests that those newer to the role may experience burnout more readily. The correlation analysis revealed a correlation of -0.26, with a p value of 0.1843, indicating a confidence interval of 82%. These phenomena are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Correlations with Burnout Score

Multivariate 95% confidence interval.... p=.05, significances

Correlations

	Female	Non-white	religious	spiritual	Work years	BELOVED COMM	Burnout
Female	1.0000	-0.0508	0.1473	0.3247	-0.2929	0.2089	0.1723
Non-white	-0.0508	1.0000	0.1980	0.2888	0.0957	-0.1758	-0.0626
religious	0.1473	0.1980	1.0000	0.3685	0.0395	0.4935	0.0264
spiritual	0.3247	0.2888	0.3685	1.0000	0.1879	0.2665	0.1024
Work years	-0.2929	0.0957	0.0395	0.1879	1.0000	0.0736	-0.2584
BELOVED COMM	0.2089	-0.1758	0.4935	0.2665	0.0736	1.0000	-0.3284
Burnout	0.1723	-0.0626	0.0264	0.1024	-0.2584	-0.3284	1.0000

There are 5 missing values. The correlations are estimated by REML method.

Correlation Probability

	Female	Non-white	religious	spiritual	Work years	BELOVED COMM	Burnout
Female	<.0001	0.7896	0.4458	0.0800	0.1163	0.2678	0.3807
Non-white	0.7896	<.0001	0.3033	0.1217	0.6148	0.3528	0.7516
religious	0.4458	0.3033	<.0001	0.0492	0.8390	0.0065	0.8940
spiritual	0.0800	0.1217	0.0492	<.0001	0.3201	0.1545	0.6042
Work years	0.1163	0.6148	0.8390	0.3201	<.0001	0.6991	0.1843
BELOVED COMM	0.2678	0.3528	0.0065	0.1545	0.6991	<.0001	0.0880
Burnout	0.3807	0.7516	0.8940	0.6042	0.1843	0.0880	<.0001

When exploring the relationship between the support of various school constituencies the respondents' results revealed the following: there was a moderate correlation between reduced burnout experienced by DEI practitioners with support from trustees, administration, and the Head of School; and there was high correlation between less burnout and support from faculty and families. DEI practitioner burnout score had: a correlation of -0.4071 with a p value of 0.0601, indicating a confidence interval of 94% with trustees support; a correlation of -0.3716 with a p value of 0.0886, indicating a confidence interval of 91% with support from the administration; a correlation of -0.433 with a p value of 0.0438, indicating a confidence interval of 95% with support from the Head of School; a correlation of -0.5072 with a p value of 0.0160, indicating a confidence interval of 98% confidence with faculty support; a correlation of -0.7053 with a p value of 0.0002, indicating a confidence interval 99% confidence with support from students' families. Support from students' families is the most highly correlated constituency with burnout according to the results of this study.

Table 2

Correlation between Burnout and Support by Constituency

Multivariate

Correlations

	Burnout	Alumni_SP	STAFF_SP	FAMILIES_SP	TRUSTEES_SP	FAC_SP	STUD_SP	ADMIN_SP	HoS_SP
Burnout	1.0000	-0.0625	-0.2893	-0.7053	-0.4071	-0.5072	-0.2539	-0.3716	-0.4337
Alumni_SP	-0.0625	1.0000	0.3166	0.1905	0.4079	0.3056	0.3484	0.3400	0.2340
STAFF_SP	-0.2893	0.3166	1.0000	0.5189	0.4000	0.5199	0.4251	0.3676	0.4115
FAMILIES_SP	-0.7053	0.1905	0.5189	1.0000	0.6643	0.5170	0.5409	0.4709	0.5957
TRUSTEES_SP	-0.4071	0.4079	0.4000	0.6643	1.0000	0.5588	0.5612	0.6395	0.6302
FAC_SP	-0.5072	0.3056	0.5199	0.5170	0.5588	1.0000	0.5317	0.6882	0.7422
STUD_SP	-0.2539	0.3484	0.4251	0.5409	0.5612	0.5317	1.0000	0.5137	0.4490
ADMIN_SP	-0.3716	0.3400	0.3676	0.4709	0.6395	0.6882	0.5137	1.0000	0.8254
HoS_SP	-0.4337	0.2340	0.4115	0.5957	0.6302	0.7422	0.4490	0.8254	1.0000

There are 4 missing values. The correlations are estimated by REML method.

Correlation Probability

	Burnout	Alumni_SP	STAFF_SP	FAMILIES_SP	TRUSTEES_SP	FAC_SP	STUD_SP	ADMIN_SP	HoS_SP
Burnout	<.0001	0.7823	0.1916	0.0002	0.0601	0.0160	0.2541	0.0886	0.0438
Alumni_SP	0.7823	<.0001	0.0883	0.3134	0.0252	0.1005	0.0592	0.0661	0.2217
STAFF_SP	0.1916	0.0883	<.0001	0.0033	0.0285	0.0032	0.0192	0.0456	0.0266
FAMILIES_SP	0.0002	0.3134	0.0033	<.0001	<.0001	0.0034	0.0020	0.0086	0.0007
TRUSTEES_SP	0.0601	0.0252	0.0285	<.0001	<.0001	0.0013	0.0013	0.0001	0.0002
FAC_SP	0.0160	0.1005	0.0032	0.0034	0.0013	<.0001	0.0025	<.0001	<.0001
STUD_SP	0.2541	0.0592	0.0192	0.0020	0.0013	0.0025	<.0001	0.0037	0.0145
ADMIN_SP	0.0886	0.0661	0.0456	0.0086	0.0001	<.0001	0.0037	<.0001	<.0001
HoS_SP	0.0438	0.2217	0.0266	0.0007	0.0002	<.0001	0.0145	<.0001	<.0001

Interventions for Sustaining DEI Practitioners

When exploring the relationship between the opposition of various school constituencies the respondents' results revealed the following: there was a moderate positive correlation between more burnout experienced by DEI practitioners with opposition from faculty, and administration; and there was a high positive correlation between more burnout and opposition from staff. DEI practitioner burnout score had: a correlation with faculty opposition of 0.3101 with a p value of 0.1083, indicating a confidence interval of 89%; a correlation with opposition from administration of 0.3477 with a p value of 0.0960, indicating a confidence interval of 90%; and a correlation with staff opposition of 0.6299 with a p value of 0.0003, indicating a confidence interval of nearly 100% (99.07%).

Table 3

Correlation between Burnout and Opposition by Constituency

Multivariate

Correlations

	Burnout	AlumniOP	STAFF_OP	FAM_OP	Trustees_OP	FAC_OP	STUD_OP	ADMIN_OP	HoS_OP
Burnout	1.0000	0.1909	0.6299	0.0437	0.2004	0.3101	0.1871	0.3477	0.2430
AlumniOP	0.1909	1.0000	0.0598	0.3947	0.2529	0.1173	0.2964	-0.0529	0.1685
STAFF_OP	0.6299	0.0598	1.0000	-0.0686	0.3242	0.2369	0.2035	0.4604	0.2606
FAM_OP	0.0437	0.3947	-0.0686	1.0000	0.1224	0.0054	0.2750	-0.0698	0.1217
Trustees_OP	0.2004	0.2529	0.3242	0.1224	1.0000	0.2440	0.2339	0.3859	0.3547
FAC_OP	0.3101	0.1173	0.2369	0.0054	0.2440	1.0000	0.3818	0.4353	0.5118
STUD_OP	0.1871	0.2964	0.2035	0.2750	0.2339	0.3818	1.0000	0.5724	0.4938
ADMIN_OP	0.3477	-0.0529	0.4604	-0.0698	0.3859	0.4353	0.5724	1.0000	0.5428
HoS_OP	0.2430	0.1685	0.2606	0.1217	0.3547	0.5118	0.4938	0.5428	1.0000

There are 10 missing values. The correlations are estimated by REML method.

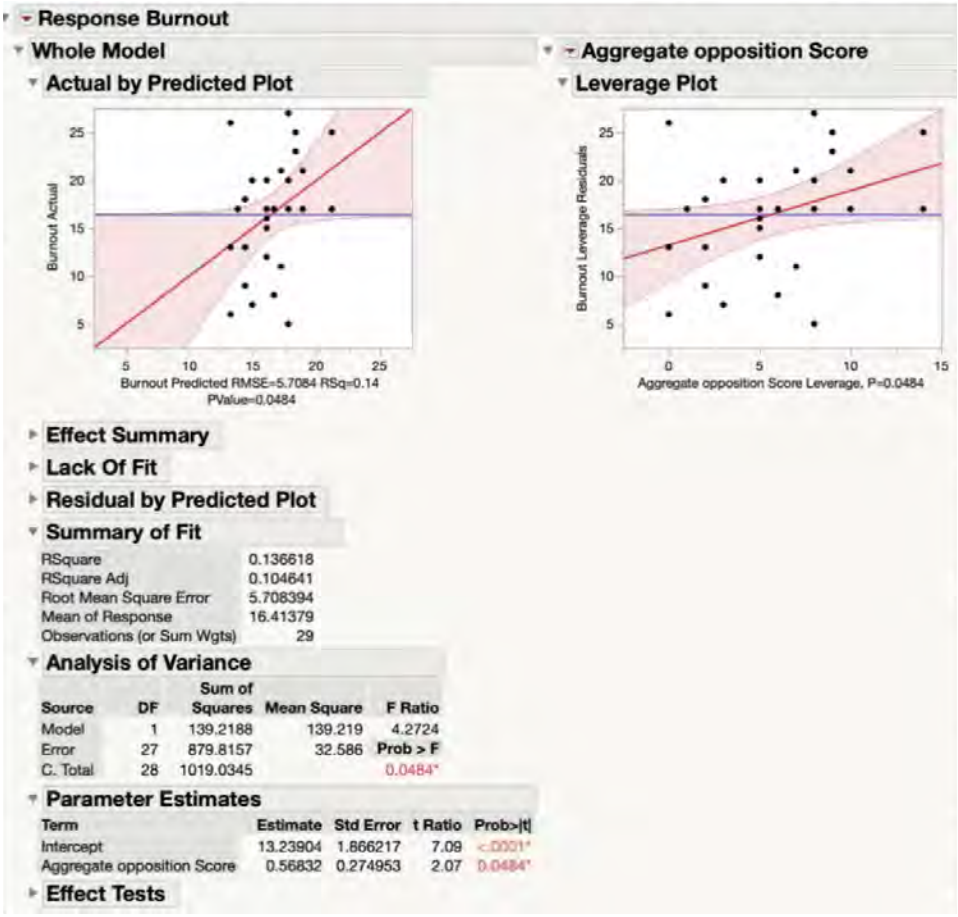
Correlation Probability

	Burnout	AlumniOP	STAFF_OP	FAM_OP	Trustees_OP	FAC_OP	STUD_OP	ADMIN_OP	HoS_OP
Burnout	<.0001	0.3305	0.0003	0.8285	0.3064	0.1083	0.3404	0.0960	0.2128
AlumniOP	0.3305	<.0001	0.7624	0.0416	0.1941	0.5522	0.1257	0.8062	0.3913
STAFF_OP	0.0003	0.7624	<.0001	0.7337	0.0923	0.2248	0.2989	0.0236	0.1805
FAM_OP	0.8285	0.0416	0.7337	<.0001	0.5430	0.9788	0.1651	0.7459	0.5454
Trustees_OP	0.3064	0.1941	0.0923	0.5430	<.0001	0.2108	0.2310	0.0625	0.0640
FAC_OP	0.1083	0.5522	0.2248	0.9788	0.2108	<.0001	0.0450	0.0335	0.0054
STUD_OP	0.3404	0.1257	0.2989	0.1651	0.2310	0.0450	<.0001	0.0035	0.0076
ADMIN_OP	0.0960	0.8062	0.0236	0.7459	0.0625	0.0335	0.0035	<.0001	0.0061
HoS_OP	0.2128	0.3913	0.1805	0.5454	0.0640	0.0054	0.0076	0.0061	<.0001

Overall, the impact of aggregate support, as identified by respondents, was not statistically significant. The impact of aggregate opposition from school constituencies was of statistical significance using a model of linear regression with a confidence interval of 95.2%. This means that burnout can be calculated by multiplying the regression coefficient of 0.568 by the aggregate opposition score and adding the y-intercept of 13.24 (Burnout marker = 13.24 (0.57 * Aggregate Opposition)). R Squared demonstrated that, while there are other contributing factors, 13% of the variance in burnout rate can be attributed to the amount of opposition practitioners reported experiencing in their work environments.

Table 4

Regression Analysis Including Aggregate Opposition Score and Burnout Score



When asked to describe, in their own words, what they believed would help to sustain them, respondents offered the 29 unique answers below in Table 5. These responses can be seen as a word cloud below in Figure 31.

Table 5

Individual Responses to Strategies to Sustaining DEI Practitioners in Independent Schools

Number	Response
1	a well, a monthly place to check in breathe and process

2	Being listened to by the Dean of Equity and Inclusion. I am seen as threatening and my suggestions seldom followed.
3	Better work-life balance, pay, opportunity to impact the institution
4	Developing true systems and practices across of our community that explicitly uphold our DEI values and statements. Not settling for hires that do not hold capacity nor have done their own personal racial and identity development work.
5	Elimination of Black on the U.S.census and acceptance of an U.S. ethnicity based on citizenship and/or region of birth. I'd be pre-colonial Virginian.
6	Flexible time off.
7	Greater resources that include staff where DEI is their main role at our school.
8	Having ample administrative support so time can be spent more strategically. Also, having a narrow focus with the intention of starting small and growing things out. Sometimes DEI practitioner's are expected to be all things to all people at the same time. Impossible.
9	having every adult employed by the school know that this work is their work too and having their understanding that this work is never done
10	I believe shared understanding and accountability for the work would help to sustain it. It feels like it's just me and I'm only good for fixing not preventing.
11	I could use more clarity in terms of what it means to do the work well, and a dedicated support team.
12	I think the best tools to sustain myself are cultivated from within. I think engaging in self-care practices continue to be useful to me.
13	I think validation and careful analysis of progress would be helpful! Administration must be strong in the application of the work to be done.
14	[No response.]
15	I want to feel like my work is making a difference. The burden of anti racist work should be shared by others, is never done, and should always be prioritized.
16	I would like a clear, unambiguous commitment to DEI work which isn't shrouded by "verbal gymnastics" which serves as an escape hatch from that commitment.
17	If the Head of School and the rest of the Admin Team held every community member (including themselves) responsible for the work, meaning people who opposed the work were no longer able to be employed in the institution.
18	Louder and consistent support from parents, students, and colleagues who do not come from marginalized identities.

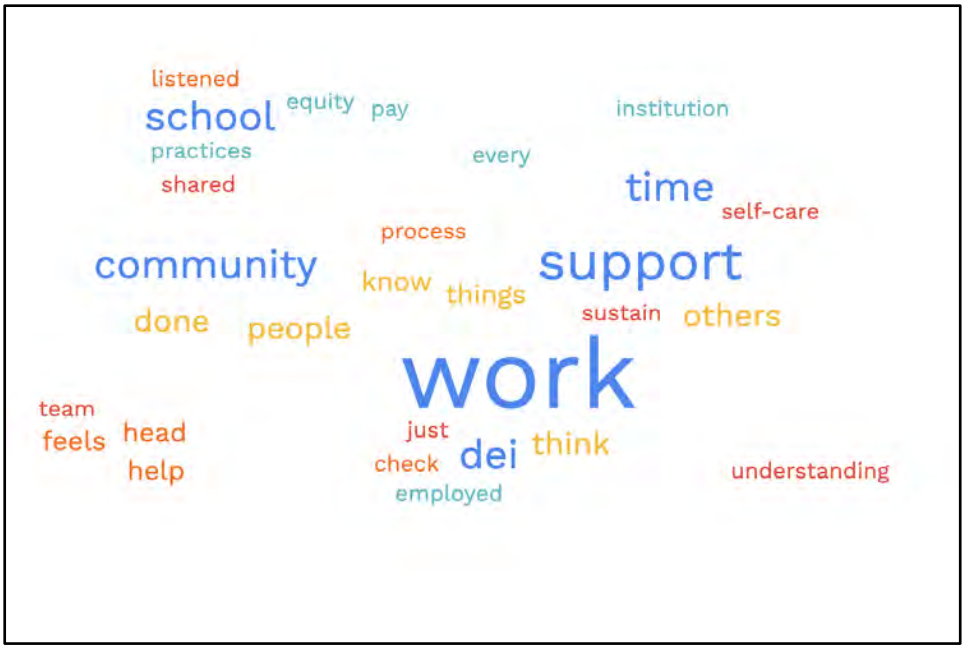
19	More active and engaged Head of School & Board that was not scared to update culture due to fear of scaring off benefactors.
20	More frequent community engagement, a time to come together to process in community the things we are going through daily. (Like a check up, and network and chill)
21	More people engaged with the work. Realistic expectations
22	More people to support the work. The work is so isolating. I need others to help me carry this burden.
23	More support from HOS, more financial support from CEO; more time to do my work.
24	Not having to convince others that this work is important.
25	School leaders who are committed to this work, knowing that it can be draining and demanding - not taking the easy way out. Diversity and equity cost something it would be great to be with others who are willing to pay that bill.
26	Strong network, clear directives, institutional support, and affinity spaces
27	The most important thing in sustaining me would be alignment with other school leaders and support from those in positions of power
28	There needs to be more time for support and self-care for DEI Practitioners; we shouldn't operate on the same schedule as teachers. We are tasked with providing quick responses and solutions, and helping the community heal, but who helps us?
29	What a question! I don't really know exactly what would help me to feel more sustained right now. That feels like another overwhelming question. I think establishing the need for beloved community for DEI practitioners by my head, perhaps, but I don't know that she has enough trust and credibility to be listened to. It just feels like such a fraught moment to be doing this work.

These responses fell into 15 categories: resources (money, time, flexibility, personnel); leadership support (including Heads of School, Trustees, and Administration); shared commitment; stamina; the development of a strong network; courageous leaders; shared understanding (of liberatory frameworks and of the scope of the work); self-care; clarity (of vision and roles); affinity spaces (in which to do some of the work); structural implementation (of practices, policies and procedures); hiring and releasing staff with an eye for equity; accountability; trust; feeling effective; and companionship. Predominant themes can be seen in

Figure 31, the size of the font corresponds to the frequency of the occurrence of the strategy suggested.

Figure 31

Word Cloud of Themed Responses to Strategies to Sustaining DEI Practitioners in Independent Schools



Discussion

Discussion of Results

Over the decades since the inception of the role of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion practitioners in independent schools in the last century, the responsibilities of the role have shifted; to be more precise, they have increased. While historically the role was focused on recruitment and admission as described in *Negro students in independent schools* (Mallory, 1963), Figure 14 demonstrates that only 50% of DEI practitioners are being asked to recruit while the vast

majority (75% of respondents or more) are involved in improving the experience of underrepresented students and faculty once in the institution. This includes: shaping DEI strategy; supporting curricular integration; teaching and training on topics of diversity; and helping to manage identity-based conflicts among students and adults. While the number of identity markers are broad, race and ethnicity continue to be central to the DEI discourse, along with class, sexual and gender identity, and religion. The nature of the role is challenging and the objectives not always well defined--diversity? belonging? justice? In addition to the aspects of the role that make it challenging, the last several years have been challenging on a national level. According to the results of this study 62% of DEI practitioners are experiencing moderate to severe burnout.

The data show that there is a correlation between belonging to a beloved community and mitigating the burnout effect. The effect size was moderate and the confidence interval, which demonstrates the extent to which the data can be extrapolated beyond the sample population, was 91%. In addition to the lived experience of the impact of a beloved community, the intensity of the belief that belonging to a beloved community would be supportive to their work (93%) was astounding. Looking internally, within the school community, the majority of respondents said there were few colleagues within their institution with whom they could speak to help mitigate work stress. In discussing the connection between burnout and isolation, psychiatrist and author Curt Thompson asserts that: "the moment that you start to tell your story vulnerably to someone else, and that person meets you with empathy — without trying to fix your loneliness, without trying to fix your shame — your entire body will begin to change" (Warren, 2022). Sacred spaces of collective healing have the potential to be a boon to practitioners.

While all of the practitioners experiencing moderate and extreme burnout were people of color, the findings of this study did not support anecdotal evidence or qualitative studies that correlate race, specifically identities of people of color, with higher rates of burnout in social

justice education and racial justice work. One contributing factor could be the sample size (n=29). It is possible that there simply were not enough data to be conclusive. This raises the question that there may be additional insulating factors from burnout for people of color or additional or novel factors that fail to insulate white practitioners. Further research would have to be conducted to gauge this. Additionally, the role of DEI practitioner is most often occupied by a person of color, 88% of school communities in 2021 (National Association of independent Schools, 2022b). It's important to note that in an exchange with NAIS Vice President for Equity and Justice she clarified that the current percentage of Heads of School of Color is 12%, an update from the aforementioned 2% (C. G. Blackwell, personal communication, November 9, 2022). By contrast, given the relatively large number of DEI practitioners who are of color, there may be a logic to being mindful of notable differences between how the role is experienced by POC versus white practitioners while applying research supported interventions using the axiom "the rising tide lifts all boats".

One aspect that could represent an important intervention is bolstering the support offered by families; among the data there was a significant and highly statistically significant inverse correlation between burnout and the support of several school constituencies, specifically that of families (see Table 2). By strengthening external communications, improving transparency and deepening parent education, schools allow the work of equity to be known, understood and championed by families. Even in the case where there isn't 100% ideological alignment, families will be less susceptible to misinformation and more likely to trust the school.

One of the findings (see Table 1) suggested that the number of years in the role was mildly inversely correlated to burnout. Given the number of factors that have impacted the work of DEI practitioners in schools in the past three years--COVID exposing and compounding racial and economic disparities among students, the murder of George Floyd and the ensuing global attention on extrajudicial killing of Black people, the anti-CRT movement, and the 202 bills currently being tracked by the ACLU regarding anti-queer legislation--there are a number of

complicating variables (*Mapping Attacks on LGBTQ Rights in U.S. State Legislature*, 2023). All of this during the years that nearly a third of the practitioners in the sample (32%) have begun this work. Additionally, practitioners who have longevity in the field may have more developed systems, credibility, or a different sense of pacing for the work. This is an outstanding question that falls outside of the scope of this study, but is interesting nonetheless.

An unexpected result of the data was that when looking at overall support of DEI practitioners and their work and the overall opposition they experience, opposition and not support is correlated to burnout. This does not mean that support by individual constituencies are meaningless, but it does mean that sustaining DEI practitioners can best be positively impacted by removing opposition and obstacles, particularly those that are internal to the school--staff, faculty, and administration. DEI practitioners benefit from knowing that the adults in their community, who have similarly chosen to embody the mission statement of the school, are on the same page as they are. This phenomenon is akin to Herzberg's two-factor theory about job satisfaction and motivation, which "argues that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction exist on two different continua, each with its own set of factors" (Nickerson, 2021). The theory explains that hygiene factors (link support, in this case) determine job satisfaction, but that motivation factors (like absence of opposition) affect how well someone performs their job and the extent to which they invest of themselves (Rogel, 2022).

Limitations

This study had a small sample size in comparison to the number of DEI practitioners that are engaged in NAIS' more than 1600 schools. While the data seemed to indicate some important trends, the study would have to be replicated with a larger sample to globalize the phenomena seen here.

Due to the fact that beloved community was treated as a single item, rather than broken down as was the case with burnout, there was not adequate nuance and flexibility with the

responses. If the study were to be replicated, breaking beloved community down into component parts may reveal more and allow for deeper analysis of the data.

Reflections on Psychological Themes

While not all the themes that were discussed in the literature review manifested in the research, described below are those that did show in the data and those that would be logical next topics for research and exploration.

Self States & Martyrdom

Given the challenges present in the work of DEI practitioners in independent schools, a relative dissatisfaction rate of 30%, as shown in Figure 20, is surprising. It begs the question, what motivates educators to continue in the role given the high amount of work stress and overwhelm that is inherent to it (as seen in Figures 27 and 28 respectively). The tension between a part of Self that feels like it's neither satisfying or effective and another part of Self that derives a sense of pride from the extent to which the work is valued (as seen in Figure 29), may be at play. Insofar as these polarities lead practitioners to martyr themselves, there is no data to suggest that they are choosing the well-being of others over their own. That would have to be undertaken in future research with the recommendation that that research be qualitative or mixed method in nature.

Trauma

For this study, the definition of trauma that was used was developed by clinician Resmaa Menakem. He describes trauma as "too much, too soon, too fast, or too long, coupled with not enough of something reparative" (2022). During this time period of the twin pandemics--COVID-19 and racial reckoning--there is a collective experience of trauma in this nation and others. It isn't surprising then, that within that national context the majority (75%, according to Table 27) of practitioners would describe their work experiences as traumatic. ***Burnout***

Respondents were asked to reply to Gorski & Chen's (2015) dimensions of burnout over a variety of questions and 62% of respondents were experiencing moderate to severe burnout (see Figure 30). While the data did not support burnout correlating to race, it is noteworthy that those experiencing the highest levels of burnout were all people of color. Fifty-two percent of respondents (34%) reported feeling a sense of isolation often or always, which can be a contributing factor to burnout.

Group Spaces of Healing

Despite only 30% of practitioners describing themselves as belonging to a Beloved Community (see Figure 25), when asked 93% believe it would be helpful to mitigating work stress. Additionally, when practitioners were asked to respond directly what they felt would sustain them, responses included: "a monthly place to check in, breathe and process"; "a dedicated support team"; "a time to come together to process in community the things we are going through daily"; "I need others to help me carry this burden"; " I think establishing the need for beloved community for DEI practitioners by my head [of school]"; and the question "We are tasked with providing quick responses and solutions, and helping the community heal, but who helps us?" Given these responses, one might ask the question, what are the barriers to engagement in beloved communities? This could be pursued in further research.

Reflections on Theological Theme

Prophets & Connection

The word prophet was not used in the survey instrument nor in any response by practitioners. There are several themes consistent with the experience of the prophet that were evident in the qualitative responses when practitioners were asked to identify what would help sustain them. They communicated a sense of isolation and negation of collective responsibility writing in these two nearly identical statements that it would help to have "every adult employed by the school know that this work is their work too and having their understanding that this work

is never done" and that "The burden of anti racist work should be shared by others, is never done, and should always be prioritized". One respondent wrote: "The work is so isolating. I need others to help me carry this burden." Additionally, several practitioners wrote about the efforts they are making and energy they are losing metaphorically shouting from their soapboxes on the street. They wrote: "I am seen as threatening and my suggestions seldom followed"; [what would help sustain me is] "not having to convince others that this work is important"; and what the work requires is "school leaders who are committed to this work, knowing that it can be draining and demanding - not taking the easy way out. These statements, along with 41% of respondents stating that they feel profound personal responsibility often or always (see Figure 28), capture the strident, solitary, and visionary role of the prophet.

Liberation

The theme of liberation was not an explicit part of this study, but rather speaks to the directionality of the work in which practitioners engage. Increasingly, there have been concerns--both as an expression of resistance to the work as well as more substantive in nature--where the use of the word/ideologies of "anti" have been called into question around antiracism and antioppresion work. Two ideas emerge from this that are worth exploring as part of the work of equity. The first is that the use of "anti" positions our attitudes, neurons, and psychology toward threat, defensiveness, or combat. The second is that stating what one is against doesn't give any sense of what is being built or the world that is hoped for, referred to in Hebrew as *olam haba*--the world to come. Further explorations of liberation might be had by collecting qualitative survey data or as part of focus groups.

Shabbat

Thirty percent (30%) of practitioners often feel forced to disengage from work (see Figure 29). Forth-eight percent (48%) experience insomnia, emotional exhaustion, depression, fatigue or feeling frayed in a way that is directly tied to their activism. Sixty-two percent (62%) say that contemplation mitigates work stress. These all point to the need for rest, quiet, time out-

-the very qualities that Shabbat can bring for restoration. In qualitative comments, practitioners identify "flexible time off", time at "the well" (a metaphor used by many Black people to refer to a place one goes to refresh and restore); and an opportunity to "network and chill".

Meaning Making

One respondent replied: "I want to feel like my work is making a difference." While not a universally held need, it points to the importance of the story practitioners make about their work, their sense of effectiveness in the community, and their personal value. When work is challenging, as DEI work is, and it feels like there is positive impact, it can be like wind in the sails. The positive impact itself can mitigate or head off the symptoms of burnout. If practitioners have anecdotal and systemically collected data that helps to make meaning of their efforts, particularly if that process is happening in community, it might have great positive impact. Though this study didn't study this explicitly, the response from one practitioner may be an invitation to do so.

Spirit & Soul

Dolly Chugh is a professor, academic, and social science researcher who has studied individual bias and social change. In an interview about her research, I asked her about the extent to which those she's interviewed discuss beloved community. Her response held a simple but critical observation that may be as true in collegiate academic spaces as in elite k-12 schools; She said, "I'm an academic in academic spaces, where there is particularly low tolerance for spiritual conversation" (personal communication, December 2, 2022). It can be hard to talk about spiritual nourishment due to the "false dichotomy between science and spirituality". In this study, the effort to address spirituality was grouped among a number of other factors about how practitioners feel. In that context, 48% stated that they experienced "loss of spirit" due to their work (see Figure 28).

Beloved Community

As discussed previously, there was a significant gap between those who were in beloved community and those who thought beloved community would be useful to them in mitigating work stress. It would be fascinating to learn more about why that gap exists. In many parts of the US, the diversity work of the region is conducted by practitioners from various schools within the region. While these spaces do contain time to connect and debrief, they are primarily work spaces to bring greater impact on the liberatory work of that geographic area. What might it be like to incorporate rest, witnessing, connection, and restoration in those spaces beside or in lieu of more work?

In addition to noting that, for many, the work of science (in which I would include education and learning) can feel antithetical to spiritual work or practice, Dr. Chugh shared that in her conversations with others, interviewees discuss both ancestors and future generations (personal communication, December 2, 2022). While some beloved communities explicitly speak to lineage, some do not. It seems, though, that a lot could be gained by multigenerational space and the explicit inclusion of rememberings, imaginings, and presences of the full scope of lineage as key support to sustaining DEI practitioners in their work.

Concluding Thoughts

We are at a complex time within our national history where fewer people have the strength and, frankly, the willingness to stay at the table to find solutions to some of our core problems. The strain of these divergent perspectives and "truths" is having an impact on our ability to treat one another with dignity and it is costing lives. For those that have been called to venture into the breach, we must do all we can to sustain them, and to join them in their work. This study provides some guidance that can be piloted to help guide our careful steps into the next phase of this journey together.

As a liberatory, anti-racist writer, speaker, coach, and consultant and as a Jew, the words of Leviticus 19:14 come to mind which commands: "You shall not…place a stumbling block before the blind" (KM, 2018). While clearly directing us to look at issues of inclusion and

physical access, I make a connection to the findings about support and opposition as experienced by the DEI practitioners in independent schools; while support can have impact, depending on the constituency, opposition, or obstacles, if you will, has a direct, negative, and statistically significant impact on burnout. As I do my work with organizations and individuals, I can apply learning here to: encourage employers to identify and remove obstacles, push clear, consistent, and frequent information about internal initiatives and curriculum to families; and practice healing in community over the oft-preferred and practiced individual model of "self care". Further, extrapolating from the context of independent schools, as a person who is working toward affecting similar transformation in the larger world, I can set myself up to internalize and apply the same lessons on my journey. Sustaining the justice seekers and movement builders, in community, sustains our movements which are reaching for dignity, access, and justice for all.

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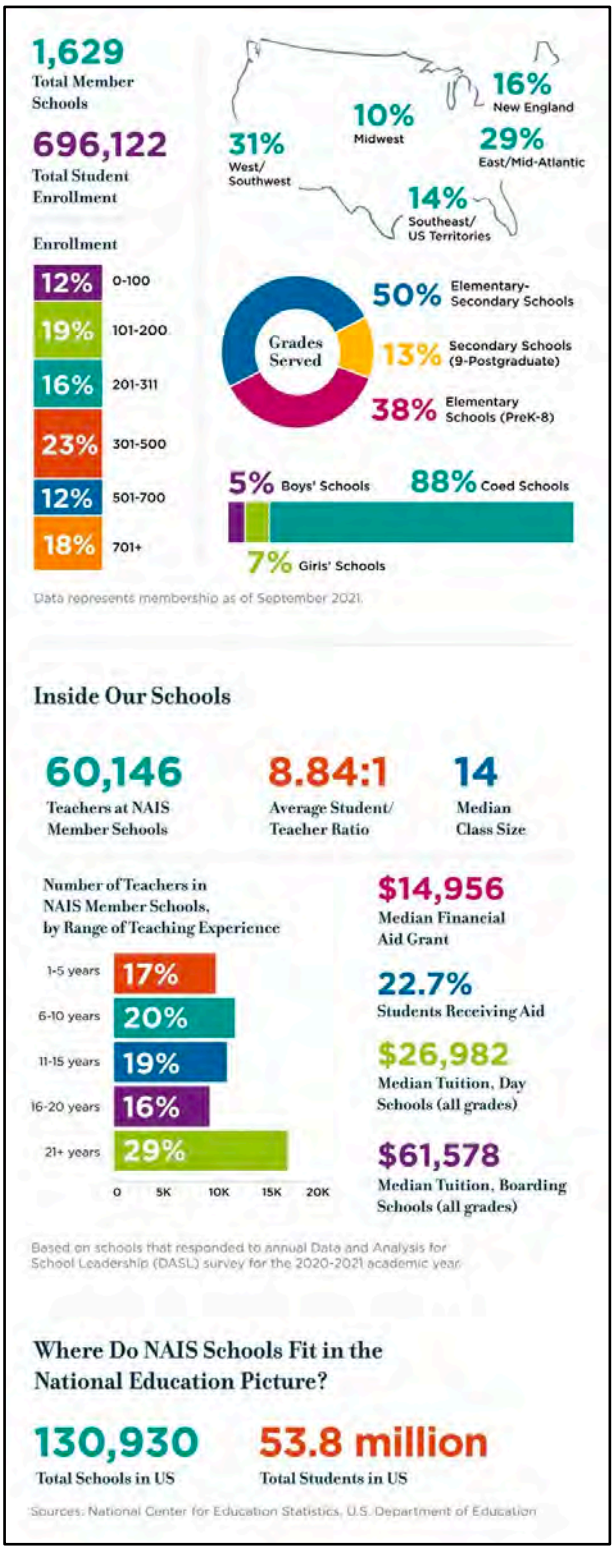
Addendum 1--NAIS 2021 Quick Facts



Addendum 2--Survey

Consent Form

Thank you for consenting to participate in this survey study. This is a survey study being conducted by Imani Chapman in New York, NY. The survey is intended to understand the experiences of DEI leaders in Independent Schools. Imani Chapman, the investigator, will guard the information collected and the identities of all the participants will be kept anonymous. All materials will be anonymous and be held in confidence by this investigator. Please be as truthful as possible. Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and greatly appreciated.

Disclosure Form

This study is a requirement for the Doctor of Ministry degree and is done under the supervision of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Interfaith Doctor of Ministry Program, New York University. The investigator, Imani Chapman, can be reached at 646.714.3181 and at imani.chapman@huc.edu. Information gathered will be used by the investigator to better understand the experiences of DEI leaders in Independent Schools. By participating in this survey, you are electronically consenting to your responses being used as described above and acknowledge that your participation is voluntary and that you have read and understood the above information. Once you reach the END PAGE of the survey, please close your browser. Thank You.

Personal Facts and Demographics

1. What sex were you assigned at birth, on your original birth certificate?[3]:
    a. Female
    b. Male

[3] https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/geniuss-trans-pop-based-survey/

2. How do you describe your current gender identity? (check one)
    a. Female
    b. Male
    c. Transgender
    d. Non-binary
    e. Do not identify as female, male, transgender, or non-binary
3. Race (please select all that apply)
    a. American Indian or Alaska Native (eg: Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Native Village of Barrow)
    b. Asian (eg: Chinese, Filipino, Hapa)
    c. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (eg: Samoan, Fijan, Marshallese)
    d. Black (eg: African American, Haitian, Ethiopian)
    e. Latinx/Hispanic (eg: Mexican-American, Cuban, Spanish, Brazilian)
    f. Middle Eastern or North African (eg: Lebanese, Syrian, Algerian)
    g. White, of European Descent (eg: Italian, French, Russian)
    h. Something else (briefly, tell us more)
4. How religious, if at all, do you consider yourself to be:
    a. Not religious
    b. Unsure
    c. Slightly religious
    d. Moderately religious
    e. Very religious
    f. Something else (briefly, tell us more)
5. How spiritual, if at all, do you consider yourself to be:
    a. Not spiritual
    b. Slightly spiritual

c. Moderately spiritual

d. Very spiritual

e. Unsure

f. Something else (briefly, tell us more)

6. Please answer to what extent you consider yourself:

    a. "a person who uses or supports strong actions to help make changes in politics or society"? (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2022)

        i. 1 (strongly disagree)

        ii. 2

        iii. 3 (neither agree nor disagree)

        iv. 4

        v. 5 (strongly agree)

    b. a person who "identifies social justice activism as [your] primary life's work" (Gorski & Chen, 2015)?

        i. 1 (strongly disagree)

        ii. 2

        iii. 3 (neither agree nor disagree)

        iv. 4

        v. 5 (strongly agree

    c. a person "who identif[ies] racial justice activism as their central life passion (Gorski, 2019, pp. 668-9)

        i. 1 (strongly disagree)

        ii. 2

        iii. 3 (neither agree nor disagree)

        iv. 4

        v. 5 (strongly agree)

7. How satisfying do you find your work as a diversity practitioner? (NAIS, 2019, p. 21)
    a. 0 (not at all satisfying)
    b. 1
    c. 2
    d. 3
    e. 4 (extremely satisfying)
8. With which of the following do you have personal lived experience as a person with a marginalized identity? (Check all that apply):
    a. Age/Ageism/Adultism
    b. Ethnicity/Ethnocentrism
    c. Sexual Orientation/Homophobia/Queerphobia
    d. Race/Racism/White Supremacy
    e. Nationality/Citizenship/Immigration Rights/Xenophobia
    f. Gender Identity & Expression/Transphobia
    g. Family Structure/Divorce/Widowhood/Single Parenting
    h. Religious Identity/Antisemitism/Islamophobia/Christian Dominance
    i. Geographic Identity/Regionalism
    j. Ability/Ableism
    k. Class/Education/Classism
    l. Body size and appearance/Sizeism
    m. Politics/Political Dogmatism
    n. IDK/unsure
9. With which of the following do you have specific training or specialized knowledge? (Check all that apply):
    a. Age/Ageism/Adultism
    b. Ethnicity/Ethnocentrism

c. Sexual Orientation/Homophobia/Queerphobia

d. Race/Racism/White Supremacy

e. Nationality/Citizenship/Immigration Rights/Xenophobia

f. Gender Identity & Expression/Transphobia

g. Family Structure/Divorce/Widowhood/Single Parenting

h. Religious Identity/Antisemitism/Islamophobia/Christian Dominance

i. Geographic Identity/Regionalism

j. Ability/Ableism

k. Class/Education/Classism

l. Body size and appearance/Sizeism

m. Politics/Political Dogmatism

n. Something else (briefly, tell us more)

Organizational Facts and demographics

10. Does your school have a free-standing diversity statement or diversity mission statement?

    a. Yes

    b. We are developing one

    c. No, Our diversity language is embedded in our school's mission statement)

    d. No

11. Which of the following best reflects your title as a diversity practitioner in your school? (NAIS, 2019, p. 10)

    a. Director/Dean of Diversity

    b. Diversity Coordinator

    c. Director/Dean of Equity and Justice

    d. Director/Dean of Multicultural Affairs

e. Director/Dean of Community Affairs

f. Something else (briefly, tell us more)

12. Who do you report to specifically for your work as your school's diversity practitioner? (Please indicate your direct supervisor.) (NAIS, 2019, p. 14)

    a. Head of School

    b. Assistant/Associate Head

    c. Director of Diversity

    d. Division Head

    e. Dean

    f. Director of Admissions

    g. Director of Development

    h. Director of Studies

    i. Director of Technology

    j. Director of Financial Aid

    k. Director of Public Relations

    l. Director of Alumni/ae Affairs

    m. Business Officer/Manager

13. Is your position/role part of the school's senior administrative team? (NAIS, 2019, p. 15)

    a. Yes

    b. No

14. What are your duties and responsibilities as your school's diversity practitioner? (NAIS, 2019, p. 18) (Check all that apply):

    a. Recruiting students from underrepresented backgrounds

    b. Planning, supporting global education programs/initiatives

    c. Recruiting faculty/staff from underrepresented backgrounds

    d. Conflict intervention/management among/between faculty and staff

e. Acting as a liaison in the admissions process
f. Leading and/or supporting community outreach
g. Monitoring policy and regulatory changes related to diversity issues
h. Reporting to the board on diversity initiatives
i. Conflict intervention/management among/between students
j. Managing budgets
k. Conducting/assisting with new faculty orientation on diversity topics
l. Meeting regularly with the head of school to report on diversity
m. Understanding the school's curriculum
n. Supporting school's hiring practices to ensure diverse workforce
o. Development, monitoring strategic diversity/inclusion plan
p. Training faculty/staff/parents/students/alumni
q. Teaching about diversity
r. Serving on the school's diversity committee/council
s. Supporting all school groups that fall within the diversity umbrella
t. Conducting workshops on diversity topics
u. Supporting multicultural education
v. Interacting with other administrators on diversity initiatives
w. Speaking about diversity
x. Consulting with faculty/administrators on diversity-related issues
y. Planning diversity programs/overseeing diversity programming

15. For how many years have you worked as a diversity practitioner? (This may include your current or previous titles.) (NAIS, 2019, p. 34)
    a. Less than 1 year
    b. 1-3 years
    c. 4-6 years

   d. 7-9 years
   e. 10-15 years
   f. 16 or more years

16. Including yourself, how many people at your school are directly responsible for implementing diversity policies and practices?(NAIS, 2019, p. 24)
   a. No additional people
   b. 2 people
   c. 3 people
   d. 4 people
   e. Between 5 and 9 people
   f. 10 or more people
17. How much support do you receive from the following groups when working on diversity and multicultural initiatives: ALUMNI, STAFF, PARENTS/FAMILIES, TRUSTEES, FACULTY/TEACHERS, STUDENTS, OTHER ADMINISTRATORS/DIRECTORS, HEAD OF SCHOOL ?(NAIS, 2019, p. 37)
   a. Support
      i. A great deal of support
      ii. A good deal of support
      iii. Some support
      iv. Not much support
      v. No support at all
18. How much opposition do you receive from the following groups when working on diversity and multicultural initiatives: ALUMNI, STAFF, PARENTS/FAMILIES, TRUSTEES, FACULTY/TEACHERS, STUDENTS, OTHER ADMINISTRATORS/DIRECTORS, HEAD OF SCHOOL ?(NAIS, 2019, p. 37)
   a. Opposition

i. A little opposition
ii. Some opposition
iii. A good deal of opposition
iv. A great deal of opposition

19. At your institution, RANK the top four issues that are most typically and historically included in DEI work, with 1 being the top priority and 4 being the fourth:
    a. Age/Ageism/Adultism
    b. Ethnicity/Ethnocentrism
    c. Sexual Orientation/Homophobia/Queerphobia
    d. Race/Racism/White Supremacy
    e. Nationality/Citizenship/Immigration Rights/Xenophobia
    f. Gender Identity & Expression/Transphobia
    g. Family Structure/Divorce/Widowhood/Single Parenting
    h. Religious Identity/Antisemitism/Islamophobia/Christian Dominance
    i. Geographic Identity/Regionalism
    j. Ability/Ableism
    k. Class/Education/Classism
    l. Body size and appearance/Sizeism
    m. Politics/Political Dogmatism
20. Which, if any, of these events and movements catalyzed or re-catalyzed your school community?
    a. #BLM (7/2013)
        i. I'm unfamiliar with this event/movement
        ii. No
        iii. Somewhat
        iv. Yes

v. Yes, significantly

b. Shooting at Mother Emanuel Church in (6/17/2015, Charleston, SC)

i. I'm unfamiliar with this event/movement

ii. No

iii. Somewhat

iv. Yes

v. Yes, significantly

c. Indigenous Mascots/Names (2016)

i. I'm unfamiliar with this event/movement

ii. No

iii. Somewhat

iv. Yes

v. Yes, significantly

d. Pulse Club Shooting (6/12/2016, Orlando, FL)

i. I'm unfamiliar with this event/movement

ii. No

iii. Somewhat

iv. Yes

v. Yes, significantly

e. Margery Stoneman Douglas School Shooting (2/14/2018) and/or March for Our Lives (3/24/2018)

i. I'm unfamiliar with this event/movement

ii. No

iii. Somewhat

iv. Yes

v. Yes, significantly

f. Migrant Children Separated from the Parents at Southern US Border (6/2018)
    i. I'm unfamiliar with this event/movement
    ii. No
    iii. Somewhat
    iv. Yes
    v. Yes, significantly
g. George Floyd's Murder (5/25/2020, Minneapolis, MN)
    i. I'm unfamiliar with this event/movement
    ii. No
    iii. Somewhat
    iv. Yes
    v. Yes, significantly
h. Black@ (6/2020, national)
    i. I'm unfamiliar with this event/movement
    ii. No
    iii. Somewhat
    iv. Yes
    v. Yes, significantly
i. Anti-CRT Strategy (7/2020, national)
    i. I'm unfamiliar with this event/movement
    ii. No
    iii. Somewhat
    iv. Yes
    v. Yes, significantly
j. Anti-AAPI Hate Campaign (begun Spring 2021)
    i. I'm unfamiliar with this event/movement

ii. No

iii. Somewhat

iv. Yes

v. Yes, significantly

k. Anti-trans Youth Legislation (Spring 2022)

i. I'm unfamiliar with this event/movement

ii. No

iii. Somewhat

iv. Yes

v. Yes, significantly

l. Tops grocery Store Shooting (5/14/2022, Buffalo, NY)

i. I'm unfamiliar with this event/movement

ii. No

iii. Somewhat

iv. Yes

v. Yes, significantly

m. School Shooting (5/24/2022, Uvalde, TX)

i. I'm unfamiliar with this event/movement

ii. No

iii. Somewhat

iv. Yes

v. Yes, significantly

Behaviors & Experiences

21. Which of these strategies are most effective for you when mitigating work stress? (Check all that apply.)

a. Movement (eg. working out, going for a walk, breath work)
b. Nature (gardening, walking, bird watching)
c. Creating (painting, music, dance, baking, refurbishing)
d. Contemplation (meditation, prayer, silence, reading)
e. Talking (therapy, chatting with a friend/colleague, coaching, pets)
f. Sensorial (laughter, music, fragrance, snuggles, food)
g. Energy work (reiki, reflexology, tapping)
h. Other (Please state briefly)

22. With what percentage of your colleagues can your work stress be effectively processed?
    a. Less than 10%
    b. 10-25%
    c. 25-50%
    d. 50-75%
    e. 75-90%
    f. All
23. Do you belong to a community or group that you experience as: "inclusive and interrelated based on love, justice, compassion, responsibility, shared power and a respect for all people, places, and things, that radically transforms individuals and restructures institutions" (Strong, 2018)?
    a. Yes
    b. Not currently, but I have been in the past
    c. No
    d. No, but I would like to

Attitudes and beliefs

24. Rate how often the following statements are true for you about your **experience**:

a. I experience so much work stress that I have "considered stepping back from activism or reducing your level of engagement" (Gorski & Chen, 2015, p. 390).
    i. 0 (never)
    ii. 1
    iii. 2
    iv. 3
    v. 4 (always)
b. I experience my work as "too much, too soon, too fast, or too long, coupled with not enough of something reparative" (Menakem, 2022).
    i. 0 (never)
    ii. 1
    iii. 2
    iv. 3
    v. 4 (always)
c. I experience insomnia, emotional exhaustion, depression, fatigue or feeling frayed in a way that is directly tied to [my] activism" (Gorski & Chen, 2015, p. 395).
    i. 0 (never)
    ii. 1
    iii. 2
    iv. 3
    v. 4 (always)
d. I experience feelings of "disillusionment or hopelessness or a shifting attitude or disposition toward [my] social justice education activism"(Gorski & Chen, 2015, p. 397).
    i. 0 (never)

ii. 1

iii. 2

iv. 3

v. 4 (always)

e. I experience "trouble eating, ongoing fatigue, unhealthy eating", or am experiencing health problems directly related to my activism, (Gorski & Chen, 2015, p. 396).

i. 0 (never)

ii. 1

iii. 2

iv. 3

v. 4 (always)

f. I experience "feelings of isolation" as a result of my racial justice work? (Gorski, 2019, p.675)

i. 0 (never)

ii. 1

iii. 2

iv. 3

v. 4 (always)

g. I *experience* professional vulnerability/targeting as a result of "bringing up racism" (Gorski, 2019, p. 677)

i. 0 (never)

ii. 1

iii. 2

iv. 3

v. 4 (always)

h. I experience and/or witness crossracial "racism from white RJ activists" in my school environment (Gorski, 2019, p. 680).

i. 0 (never)

ii. 1

iii. 2

iv. 3

v. 4 (always)

25. Rate how often the following statements are true for you about your *feelings*:

I feel I am "losing my spirit as a result of my social justice work" (Gorski & Chen, 2015, p. 381).

i. 0 (never)

ii. 1

iii. 2

iv. 3

v. 4 (always)

b. I feel "overwhelmed by the enormity of the sociopolitical conditions, feelings of not doing enough, or feeling like not enough has been accomplished" (Gorski & Chen, 2015, p. 397).

i. 0 (never)

ii. 1

iii. 2

iv. 3

v. 4 (always)

c. I *feel* "a profound personal responsibility for eliminating racism, a deep emotional relationship to racial justice" (Gorski, 2019, p.675)

i. 0 (never)

ii. 1

iii. 2

iv. 3

v. 4 (always)

d. I feel "bringing up racism makes [me] professionally vulnerable" (Gorski, 2019, p. 677)

i. 0 (never)

ii. 1

iii. 2

iv. 3

v. 4 (always)

26. Rate how often the following statements are true for you about your *working*:

a. I am "forced to disengage from activist activities, even temporarily due to emotional exhaustion, physical exhaustion, cynicism or hopelessness" (Gorski, 2019, p. 673)

i. 0 (never)

ii. 1

iii. 2

iv. 3

v. 4 (always)

b. The equity work I do is valued by [my] community" (By constituency?) (Gorski, 2019, p. 677).

i. 0 (never)

ii. 1

iii. 2

iv. 3

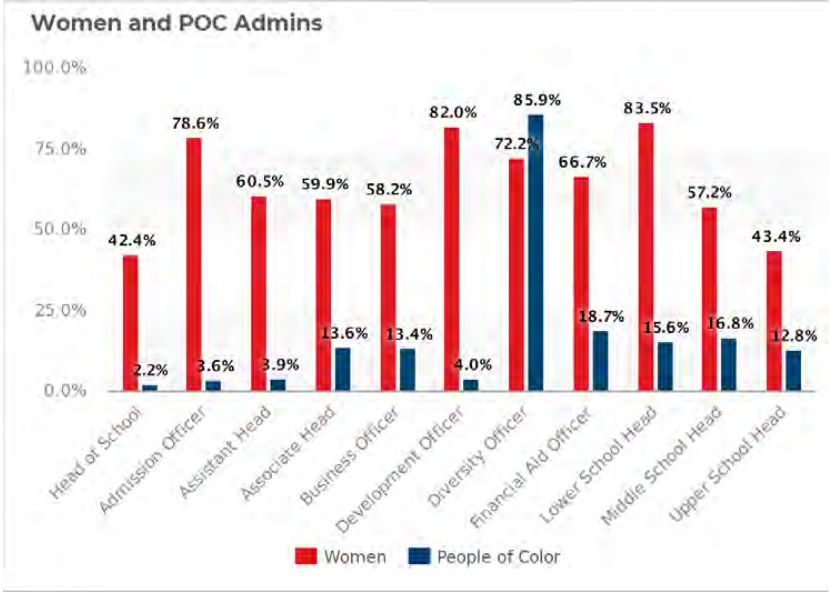
v. 4 (always)

c. Among DEI practitioners, I witness "in-fighting and ego clashes" occur (Gorski, 2019, p. 679).
   i. 0 (never)
   ii. 1
   iii. 2
   iv. 3
   v. 4 (always)

d. Among DEI practitioners, I witness "competition related to who had more 'street cred', adopted the most radical language, or withstood the most oppression" (Gorski, 2019, p. 679).
   i. 0 (never)
   ii.
   iii. 1
   iv. 2
   v. 3
   vi. 4 (always)

27. To what extent do you think it would feel supportive to you to belong to a community that was: inclusive and interrelated based on love, justice, compassion, responsibility, shared power and a respect for all people, places, and things, that radically transforms individuals and restructures institutions" (Strong, 2018)?
    a. It would feel unsupportive
    b. It would not feel neither supportive nor unsupportive
    c. It would feel a little supportive
    d. It would feel very supportive
    e. Sign me up!

28. Identify what family of feelings comes up for you when you look at the graphic below (National Association of Independent Schools, 1988–2021):
    a. Joyful (excited, fascinated, hopeful)
    b. Mad (hurt, critical, distant)
    c. Peaceful (content, secure, grateful)
    d. Powerful (proud, valuable, confident)
    e. Sad (guilty, isolated, tired)
    f. Scared (confused, insecure, discouraged)



29. In Your own words, please share briefly (25 words or less) what you believe would help to sustain you as an independent school DEI practitioner.