The NEK is a place where we all belong

It is in community that we discover what people care about.

It is in community that we discover an abundance of leaders, people who are willing to step forward to serve.

It is in community that we reweave the frayed relationships, restoring health and possibility.

It is in community that we rediscover that nearly everybody wants to learn, contribute, belong, and work well together.

-Berkana Institute

The NEK is a place where we believe…

- Diversity of thought and experience is a blessing, not a problem
- Everyone holds a piece of the truth
- Meaningful relationships between individuals and among groups are essential to forward movement
- Movement happens when people and institutions move thoughtfully between reflection and action
- Process is just as important as content. Results are driven by good process.
- Long-term change happens when leaders are consistently building new leaders
- Positive, equitable and just social change cannot occur without shifting power to those with the most at stake in finding equitable solutions

Good Neighbor Agreements

1. **Good Neighbors Know Community Starts with Them**
- Our actions, words and choices are examples to others
- We make connections by being curious and interested

2. **Good Neighbors Are Considerate Of Others**
- We choose to be kind and friendly
- We make others feel welcome

3. **Good Neighbors Are Supportive**
- We address challenges and disagreement by asking questions
- We share our skills and knowledge

4. **Good Neighbors Encourage Safe Spaces**
- We are attentive to community needs
- We acknowledge the different experiences of others

We honor choice – especially in the ways and how much each person chooses to participate

The Hub

Group present agreed to adhere to the Good Neighbor Agreements

I used to think...Now I think...
This would be easier, but this is much harder.
How different people and groups define "health" and "wellbeing".
There *needs* to be community at the table. We MUST have community at the table.

New idea I am taking away
The infographic prompted me to think about working further upstream.
Using art, stories and creativity for data and as tools for healing and recovery.
Maybe we need to find a way to be invited to the community tables instead of asking them to come to "ours."
Go to where people already are, like the Hub.
For us, who have traditionally been a part of collaborative work, to be the ones going outside of our comfort zones and being vulnerable in new ways.
What is the culture for professionals to show up, authentically and vulnerably, and share our life experiences? It's complicated.
We can use the grant supplied professionals to help overcome our fears and do the hard work.

My hope for this work in my community
Strengthened collaborations and use of SDoH to help focus our work. Getting input from the community in a representative way
That it helps bring back the sense of community throughout the kingdom again. Our little town streets are filled with people connecting, engaging, and supporting each other and we no longer need to wonder who is at the table because we are all present.
The format for and content of our conversations and people involved in those conversations is different and more diverse and inclusive.
Our conversations are more inclusive of the aging community and establishing a shared vision of what aging well in our community looks like.
Spaces where partners are truly together, working in a person-centered and directed way.
Holistic, integrated and inclusive health practices.
Bring some focus to the youth – specifically teenagers and young adults – their unique needs and unique struggles. They seem to have been forgotten in our communities…which, in my opinion, is a major "feeder" to a number of our community health challenges.
We tap into the vast, unmined lived experience of those already working in our organizations, agencies and institutions; and amplify those voices and build leadership.

Biggest risk/fear for this work in the NEK

Biggest risk/fear... that we won't have the courage to take significant risks, to transcend our fears!

A year from now it is going to look the same. Everyone is white.

Not everybody feels safe enough to be at the table, or to speak up if they are.

We won't do the work.

~~Our "Western culture" is prone to finding the fastest, most efficient ways to get things done and puts a lot of emphasis on results.~~ "Oops": That was a very inaccurate, non-inclusive statement. I should have said that it's the dominant white culture in the U.S. that has those characteristics.

As power shifts, those with institutional power leave the table and the conversations. They will no longer see themselves as part of community. It is always going to be an "us" and "them", zero sum game (or conversation). "If you have the power and the voice, than I do not/cannot."

We quit b/c the work is so hard, requires so much from us personally and is different from what dominant white colonialist Western culture traditionally sees and values as "work".

Roadblocks that exist

Effectively gathering data and representing diverse voices

Ability/permission in our actual roles as professionals to go out and engage differently.

Sometimes questions about services and resources (or negative experiences with those services and resources) are met by organizations/ agencies with excuses and defensiveness rather than acknowledgement and accountability.

Unwillingness (discomfort with?) to uncover our role in perpetuating the status quo and role in the persistent issues.

How to capture community partners/individuals interest

How do we make people feel comfortable and a part of the conversation?

Where can we go to sit with those who do not already have input or are not well represented?

The use of stories rather than data to "inspire" others to action or willingness to open up to alternative ways of thinking and being

Who might be harmed by our actions

People who we are trying to reach if they are not at the table

Who benefits from our decisions and actions and how

Our already connected agencies / organizations. They are at this table, with a voice, and decision-making power.

Who leads

There are many leaders already out there. Maybe they don't want our institutional input, support or involvement...

Who decides
Can we commit to an open and inclusive decision making process (via widespread polling in different ways) for grant $?

Needs to be successful
The need to see diversified data sets.
Support and information about where to find and how to invite the 1% (i.e., Abenaki).

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