

The Journey of Relational Trust in Authentic Community Driven Research

Strategies to Achieve Alignment, Collaboration and Synergy across Delivery and Financing Systems

Research-in-Progress Webinar
February 25, 2026
12pm ET

eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca
madison

colorado school of
public health

Presenters



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Who We Are

YWCA Madison is on a mission to eliminate racism, empower women, and promote peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all.



Since our founding in 1908, we have worked alongside our Madison Community and in solidarity with over 200 YWCA sibling associations across the United States to build a more just and equitable world on a path towards collective liberation.



Who We Are

Guided by our co-created values of ***community, humanity, growth, and restoration***, the heart of our mission lives through programs in **housing justice, economic justice, restorative justice, and learning and movement building**.

To truly dismantle racism and build a liberated world, our collective approach must be multifaceted, nuanced, and rooted in solidarity as all systems of oppression are interconnected and mutually reinforcing.

In all areas of our work, we are committed to addressing the ways racism intersects with other systems of oppression while also working across movements to advance justice for all.



Overview of Community at Downtown Residence



**Our Downtown Residence
is currently Home to:**

- 15 Single Moms**
- 17 Children**
- 61 Single Women**
- 29 Elders**



**Our Families Shelter
is currently Home to: 8 Families
(10 Adults with 13 Children)**

Formation & Intentions

- Amplify Resident Voice and Leadership
- Create a process to Engage Whole Downtown Residence Community
- Collaboration between Staff from *Residential Housing* and the *Learning & Movement Building* Teams
- One touchstone in a longer Journey of Transformation
 - Hope to foster collaborations with systems to be responsive to the identified needs of Residents

Overview of Journey & Process

- Applications from residents
 - Residents compensated for their time
- Research partners at UBUNTU Research & Evaluation
 - Full Day Retreat — Co-Create Values and Working Agreements
 - Report and Recommendations based on the Resident-Led Needs Assessment



Koren Dennison



Linetta Alexander Islam

Resident Leaders Group

Overview of Journey & Process (continued)

- Exploration of Transformative Frameworks, Skills & Practices:
 - Dignity-Based Beloved Community
 - NOISE Analysis (Needs, Opportunities, Improvements, Strengths, and Exceptions)
 - Accountability & Transformative Justice
 - Housing Justice
 - Practice with Empathic Listening
 - Data Visualization and Photo Voice as methods for Data Collection



Resident Leaders Group

Overview of Journey & Process (continued)

- Engagement with Community through Needs Assessment
 - Data collection method: photo voice + additional methods Residents identified as responsive
- Co-exploration & Planning related to the recommendations that emerged from the Needs Assessment



Relational Trust as Foundation

Dynamics & Opportunities for Responsive and Relational Supports in the Process

- Need for community building and setting a container for shared practice.
- Vast spectrum of experiences, histories, traumas, etc. within the group and in the 101 community.
- Frameworks related to the research leaned towards academic language, which at times caused a disconnect or was less accessible for some residents.

Relational Trust as Foundation

Dynamics & Opportunities for Responsive & Relational Supports in the Process

Need for community building and setting a container for shared practice

- ➔ **Slow the process down ; Make space for resident leaders to be heard, share stories, etc.**
 - **Spent more time with Values & Agreements to set the foundation**
- ➔ **Make spaces and opportunities to support one another in practicing key skills**
- ➔ **Develop relational trust over time—make it possible for residents to express/communicate feedback about what needs to be transformed in the community without fear or worry about consequences**

Relational Trust as Foundation

Dynamics & Opportunities for Responsive & Relational Supports in the Process

**Vast spectrum of experiences, histories, traumas, etc.
within the group and in the 101 community**

- ➔ ***Co-create and re-connect with* working agreements based in shared values and expressed needs**
- ➔ **Offer alternate options for engagement in addition to the frameworks and invitations presented for the data collection process**
- ➔ **Space, Pace, and Grace**

Relational Trust as Foundation

Dynamics & Opportunities for Responsive & Relational Supports in the Process

Frameworks related to the research leaned towards academic language, which at times caused a disconnect/was less accessible for some residents.

- ➔ **Residential Housing and Learning & Movement Building Staff supported bridging between presented frameworks and the Residents' existing expertise and lived experiences**
- ➔ **Provide additional processing and engagement sessions outside of the established sessions with research partners at UBUNTU**

“

“I appreciated being supported in multiple ways: personal growth, relationship building, shared learning, and being involved in advocacy.

I was able to become fascinated with how staff and residents create shared spaces for living and working on goals.

I felt uplifted financially, and empowered to make meaningful conversations with residents, with the chance for outcomes, instead of stagnant gossip.”

”

Impact on Experience for Resident Leaders

ALL of the Resident Leaders reported that, as a result of this experience, they:

- were able to build and deepen relationships with other members of the group.
- were able to build and deepen relationships with other residents in the 101 Community.
- felt more connected to their neighbors in the 101 Community.
- felt an increased responsibility for/with the 101 Community.
- became more clear about the values that are important to them when part of a community like the RLG.
- became more clear on how they want to show up when in a group with community members.
- have increased their own knowledge around equity and justice.
- increased their own knowledge around accountability.
- increased their own skills for how they listen to others.
- learned about data collection and ways to engage their community.
- practiced listening to their neighbors about their experiences
- learned more about how others experience the 101 Community.
- practiced sharing about their experiences in the 101 Community.
(both the good aspects, and the aspects that need to be transformed! *)
- had opportunities to imagine future changes that could improve the experience of being a 101 resident.

“

I've learned so much and I look forward to learning more. Facilitators were so kind/understanding and have a wealth of knowledge!! Even though I'm shy, I'm willing to take the risk to help myself and others at the YWCA.

I enjoy hearing life stories/situations and the possibilities that I can give advise/knowledge to help others learn and grow.

For change to happen I had to first work on changing myself.

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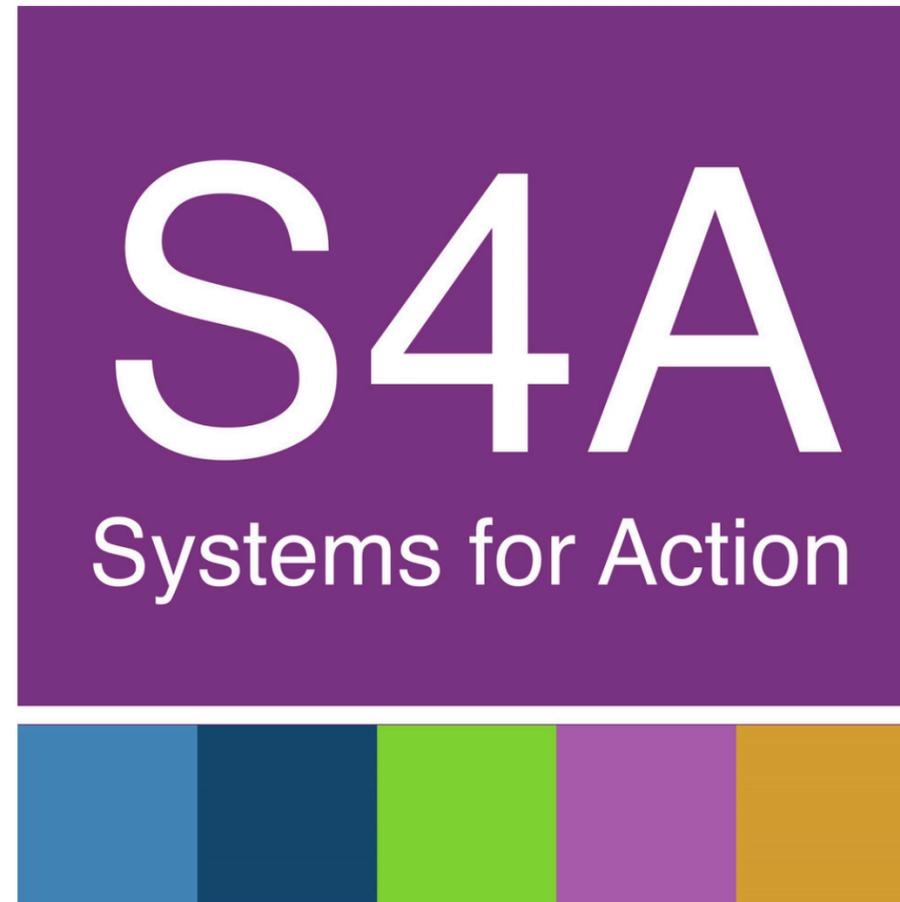
Planning for the future based on Resident-Led Needs Assessment:

- Continue to collaborate with outside community organizations to build an ecosystem of support for residents and staff. Foster Dynamic Partnerships and a Comprehensive Support Ecosystem.
- Revise the current visitation policy to create a new policy that honors the dignity of autonomy and relationships of all residents.
- Empower residents' sense of autonomy, mutual rank, relationships, and honesty by creating specific committees to engage in community building and collaboration within the resident community.

Next Steps: Continue Convening the RLG!

- Create process for 2nd round of resident leaders to join the next cohort; will have mix of original cohort and new folks.
- Continue to move at the speed of trust, and plan for the process to be responsive and adaptive to the next iteration of Resident Leaders needs.
- Engage with additional skills and practices to support the residents and staff in feeling confident and equipped to foster the mindsets and practices needed to continue to transform the culture toward humanity, community, growth, and restoration.
- Some possibilities for practices to explore together:
 - Community Building through Restorative Circle Practice
 - Practices for Engaging with our Stress Responses
 - Practice with Grounded Boundary Setting rooted in Dignity and Humanity
 - Practices for Conflict Transformation
 - Practices for Shared Decision Making

Questions?



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Wednesday, March 11 | 12pm ET

Join Dr. Ivan Douglas Hicks and David Craig to learn more about the 'Fight On – Medicaid Panoply', a comprehensive advocacy initiative led by the AfricaLogical Institute. The Panoply is described as a “living archive”, aiming to resist policies that undermine Medicaid and to promote health equity. It’s both a research-based blueprint and a grassroots mobilization tool, emphasizing that Medicaid is not just policy—it’s a moral and ethical mandate. It is designed to mobilize community voices, faith leaders, scholars, and healthcare partners in defense of Medicaid access and equity.

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