



A NETWORK OF WELLBEING

CATALYST INITIATIVE
EVALUATION REPORT

2014-2022



**MINNEAPOLIS
FOUNDATION**



GEORGE FAMILY
FOUNDATION



**INSPIRE
TO CHANGE**



FOREWORD

Inspire to Change partnered with Catalyst Initiative to conduct an impact evaluation of their work from 2014 to 2021. As we journeyed through the evaluation process, we found that at its core, Catalyst Initiative is an act of love. It is the belief in human potential made visible. It is the fulfillment of our responsibility to our ancestors, our gifts, and our descendants. We invite you to see what happens when committed change-makers co-create a network of wellbeing.

-The Inspire to Change Team

A NETWORK OF WELLBEING: CATALYST INITIATIVE EVALUATION REPORT

Welcome iii

Acknowledgments v

Introduction 01

Theory 07

Conditions for Healing 08

Core Strategies to Develop
a Network of Wellbeing 13

Ripples of Impact 31

Discussion 32

Conclusion 34

Appendices 36



WELCOME



In my work at Catalyst Initiative, I have been committed to helping people understand that doing their own inner work is critical to being a powerful change agent. Everyone comes into their vocation with their own life experiences, wounds, gifts, and passions. Whether we do our inner work, and the time and effort we put into it, can mean the difference between creating extraordinarily positive change, ineffective efforts, and causing harm to people and communities.

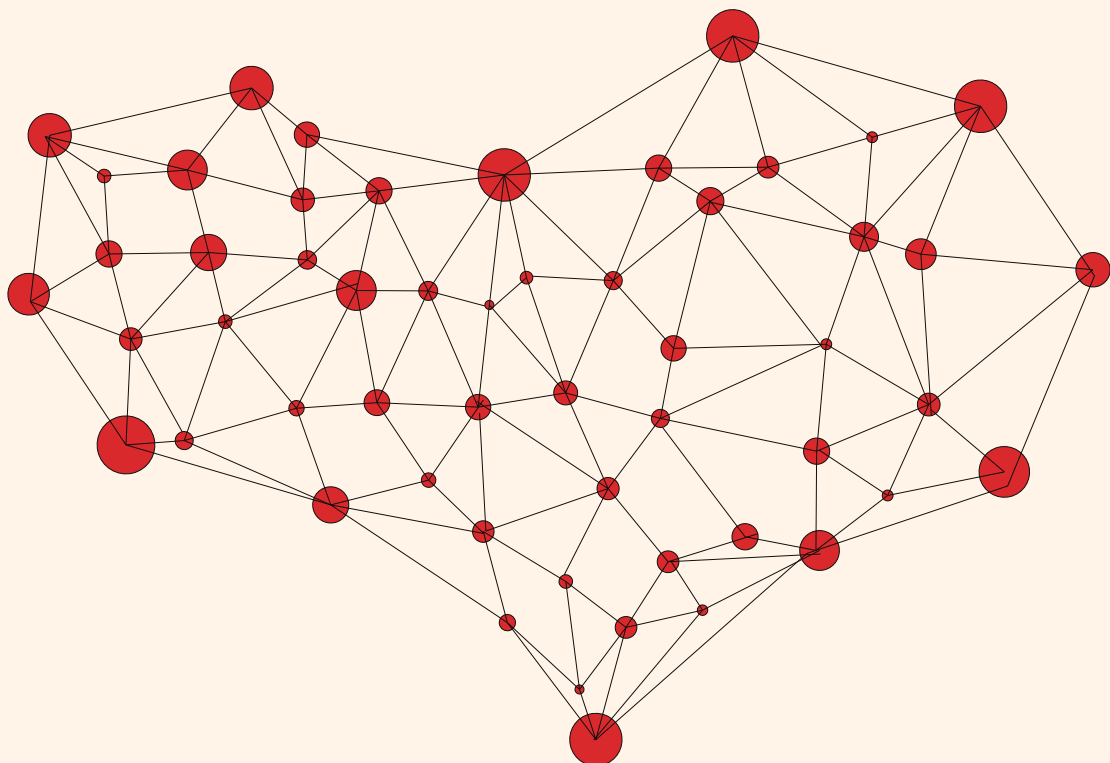
For me, the work of Catalyst Initiative, or of philanthropy in general, is not about financial investments, SMART goals, and measurable impacts. Rather, it is a deeply human endeavor. It is about supporting, deepening, and expanding the larger conversation around trauma. It is about helping people access culturally specific ways to learn from traumatic experiences—to process and move through those experiences and become a different person. In Western medical terms, how can we use healing from post-traumatic stress as an opportunity for post-traumatic growth? This isn't easy or fast work.

I have been held at gunpoint, beaten, and shot at, and I would rather that no one else have to go through anything like that. However, these events marked the beginning of my journey to understand my own triggers and habits, and the importance of caring for myself as a leader. I woke up and said, "I'm alive." My traumatic experiences allowed me to embrace life and opportunity in a way that I may never have come to otherwise.

I am not suggesting that we look back at our traumas and say, “Oh, that really helped me a lot.” Instead, it is important to understand that what happened has happened to our ancestors and to us, and that we cannot change it. But what we do with it can be a pivot point—a catalyst. As we pivot, we have the opportunity to make choices. We can choose to let our traumatic experiences hold us down and keep us stuck, or go deep and really open up to the full realm of possibilities. We can find a way to transform something awful into something positive—to transform the darkness and despair into light and hope. That is power. That is social change. And that's what I'm trying to get at with Catalyst Initiative.

I contracted Inspire to Change to do an impact evaluation. What they shared back with me, and now with you, is a story that is much deeper. Yes, there are impacts of Catalyst Initiative’s work that we are excited to share. But the larger story is that it is an important example of what it means to invest in a non-Western way—in a way that believes in human potential and resilience, trusts the community to find their own culturally-rooted solutions, understands that healing is power and the key to social change, and that this commitment to social change is the fulfillment of our ancestors’ vision, our responsibility to our gifts in this life, and the work of illuminating a path for our descendants.

-Suzanne Koepplinger, Director, Catalyst Initiative



PARTNER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would not have been able to do this work without the time, coordination, and commitment of the following partners and those who work with them so tirelessly to transform their communities:

Suzanne Koepplinger, Catalyst Initiative

Kathy Allen, Allen and Associates

Andree Aronson, Liberty Northside Healing Space

Imee Cambroner, Minneapolis Foundation

Mona Carloni, Intercultural Alliance/Somali Women's Circle of Health

Dr. Darlene Fry, Irreducible Grace Foundation

Reverend Dr. Alike Galloway, Liberty Northside Healing Space

Ashley Jallen, Native American Community Clinic

Kristin Johnstad, Johnstad and Associates

Martha Lee, Joi Unlimited

Dr. Joi Lewis, Joi Unlimited

Jan Mandel, Irreducible Grace Foundation

Mariam Mohamed, Intercultural Alliance/Somali Women's Circle of Health

Imam Sharif Mohamed, Open Path Resources

Rebeka Ndosi, Healing Illuminated

Gayle Ober, George Family Foundation

Margaret Rousu, White Earth Land Recovery Project

Marnita Schroedl, Marnita's Table

Dr. Antony Stately, Native American Community Clinic

Elexis Trinity, Marnita's Table

Dr. Michael Van Keulen, Open Path Resources



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We collectively acknowledge that Catalyst Initiative, its partners, and Inspire to Change (I2C) operate within the traditional, ancestral, and contemporary lands of Indigenous people, often referred to as Minneapolis/St. Paul Metropolitan region. We reside on land that was cared for and called home by the Ojibwe and Dakota peoples, as well as other Native peoples from time immemorial.

Ceded by the Dakota and Ojibwe in the 1800s under threat of military force, this land holds great historical, spiritual, and personal significance for its original stewards, the Native nations and peoples of this region. We recognize and continually support and advocate for the sovereignty of the Native nations in this territory and beyond. By offering this land acknowledgment, we affirm tribal sovereignty and will work to hold ourselves accountable to American Indian peoples and nations.

We recognize the land as an expression of gratitude and appreciation. It is important for each of us to understand the long-standing history that has brought us to reside on the land and to seek to understand our place within that history. We also recognize that land acknowledgments do not exist in a past tense or historical context: colonialism is a current and ongoing process, and we must carefully consider our own participation in power structures rooted in historical trauma and oppression.

RACIAL JUSTICE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Why did one straw break the camel's back? / Here's the secret / The million other straws underneath it.

-Mos Def (Yasiin Bey) (*Mathematics*)

Our country has grappled with issues of race, ethnicity, and justice since its inception. The past few years have highlighted our continuing struggle with inequity, violence, and systemic racism in all sectors.

Here in the Twin Cities, the grief and effects of racial inequity and violence are on full display. The murder of George Floyd and the uprisings afterward brought decades of grief, rage, and unanswered calls for justice into our streets and onto our screens. Systemic underinvestment and disinvestment in communities of color continue to perpetuate healthcare inequities, educational disparities, over-policing, barriers to housing and economic prosperity, and much more.

We condemn the systemic racism, injustice, and inequity that persists in our community. We are sad, mad, tired, enraged, and depressed, but we refuse to give up. We commit ourselves to collective healing. We stand together with the victims of murder, marginalization, and repression based on skin color, and with those who seek justice through protests across our country. While we seek justice for individuals and families affected by state-sponsored violence and racism, we also seek systemic change to prevent these tragedies in the future.



A close-up photograph of a person wearing a green surgical mask. Their hands are clasped together in a prayerful gesture, resting on their chest. The person is wearing a blue garment. The background is dark and out of focus.

COVID-19 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

History has changed forever. The COVID-19 Pandemic is one of the most dangerous challenges this world has faced in our lifetime. It is above all a human crisis, with severe health and socio-economic consequences. All 7.6 billion humans alive today have been affected by this Pandemic, and we collectively grieve for the more than 5.5 million people across the world who have lost their lives to this illness, including Charley Pride, John Prine, Ellis Marsalis Sr., Anne Sullivan, and Colin Powell. We send our thoughts, prayers, and best wishes to everyone working to manage and adapt to COVID-19 in their communities, and those directly impacted by the virus.

INTRODUCTION



Catalyst Initiative honors and fosters culturally authentic self-care practices to advance the health and wellbeing of communities in need, including people experiencing current and/or historical trauma, toxic stress, inequities, or lack of access to opportunities. This work is not straightforward, and success may be defined differently in different communities. Trusting community members to know what they need is vital to the process, as is taking risks on visionaries within the community. In light of the complexity of the work, the evaluation must include creative methods that are both useful to the intended users and support ongoing learning, adaptation, and innovation.

This 9-month impact evaluation was undertaken with the use of Creative Evaluation and Engagement (CE&E), which combines elements of utilization-focused evaluation, developmental evaluation, principles-focused evaluation, and arts-based evaluation. This approach was employed to produce a deeper understanding and insight into the impact of Catalyst Initiative. The overarching evaluation question was: What impact are self-care and healing having in the community as a result of direct or indirect support from Catalyst Initiative?

This question was further delineated with four sub-questions. To what extent and in what ways has Catalyst Initiative:

- fostered understanding about the benefits and importance of self-care, trauma-healing, and well-being?
- connected networks and leadership that embed culturally authentic healing practices in communities?
- championed policies, practices, and investments that advance self-care as primary care?
- boldly invested in promising practices in self-care and healing?

This report describes the principles-focused developmental evaluation Inspire to Change undertook with Kristin Johnstad of Johnstad and Associates (evaluation partner), and Catalyst Initiative's funded partners. The report has three parts. *Conditions for Healing* describes the context in place that allowed healing to begin. *Six Strategies to Develop a Network of Wellbeing* describes how Catalyst Initiative created and sustained a network for healing. *Ripples of Impact* describes why this work is necessary, and advocates for Catalyst Initiative's approach as an alternative to more common approaches to philanthropy. These three parts are followed by appendices (including information about partners, evaluation methodology, sample documents, and references).



NOTEWORTHY INFLUENCES

The George Family Foundation created the Catalyst Initiative in 2014, and Suzanne Koepplinger has led it since its inception. For some people, the names Catalyst Initiative and Suzanne Koepplinger are interchangeable. It became clear in the analysis that we needed to attempt to disentangle them, so that Catalyst Initiative can adapt and flourish whether or not Suzanne Koepplinger is in a leadership role. To this end, we want to take this opportunity, before presenting the results, to share three noteworthy influences that have become part of the Catalyst initiative's DNA.

First, we must acknowledge and pay tribute to Suzanne Koepplinger's personal and professional identities and experiences. We learned some about her lived experience in her welcome letter. Her experience as a leader of an Indigenous-led and Indigenous-serving organization illuminated ways in which systems fail people. We see her deep commitment to catalyzing change to advance progress towards better systems—systems that believe in and nurture the human potential.

Second, we note the influence of Norma Wong, a mentor and colleague of Suzanne Koepplinger. Wong is a Rinzai Zen Priest and movement strategist who teaches that nurturing one's own spirit, in alignment with their higher purpose, is our right as human beings, and our responsibility to our ancestors and descendants (Resonance Network, 2020). Wong teaches that we can and ought to access our old, ancestral wisdom, which can and ought to inform our new worldview; we can and ought to relate to the harm that's being acted out in the name of the dying worldview, and still usher in a new worldview; and we can and ought to cultivate an internal worldview that feels so vibrant in our inner space that it frees us to find light, life, and expression in the outer world.

Third, we bring attention to the work of Kathy Allen, a mentor and colleague of Suzanne Koepplinger. Allen takes a holistic approach to organizations through the lens of nature (Allen, 2018). She teaches that, similar to the way a tree anchored in the soil experiencing sun and rain is part of the larger environment, organizations are interdependent living systems; when working with and in systems, we should endeavor to see the whole, including how people connect to others and the external environment. In addition, because a living organization is in constant change, feedback and adaptation are key to organic, catalyzed change.

EMERGENT FRAMEWORK

Inspire to Change implemented a variety of methods during the evaluation process to bring insight and clarity to the essential elements of the emerging framework.

METHODS

The primary method used for this evaluation was Ripple Effect Mapping (REM). REM is a group participatory method for impact evaluation that engages program and community stakeholders to retrospectively and visually map the chain of effects resulting from a program or complex collaboration (Washburn et al., 2020). In addition to REM, Inspire to Change received input from an advisory group and reviewed Catalyst Initiative evaluation documents from the past five years. The documents provided retrospective information that might not otherwise have been revealed in the REM sessions, and provided “color” and context to the work. Finally, Inspire to Change committed to reflective practice throughout the evaluation process, allowing key members of the Catalyst community to actively engage with, learn from, and respond to the results. The evaluation approach is described in detail in Appendix B.

FRAMEWORK

The resulting framework has four elements: **Theory, Conditions, Strategies, and Ripples.**





Theory

Catalyst Initiative's Theory of Change is less logic model and more DNA; less smart goals and more poetry; less return on investment calculations and more an **act of love**.

Conditions

No one person alone can create healing and wholeness in people and communities. But each of us can contribute to, and take responsibility for, **cultivating the right conditions**.

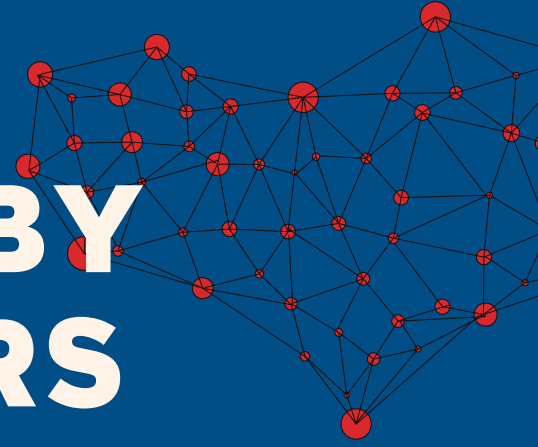
Strategies

There is no prescription, recipe, or silver bullet that will bring healing and wholeness to people and communities. But each of us can contribute to, and take responsibility for, **implementing strategies** that make these experiences possible.

Ripples

Taken together, these conditions and strategies ripple across the network, from node to node, cultivating **new and healthier conditions**, inspiring culturally-grounded adaptations and supporting health.

SNAPSHOT: BY THE NUMBERS



Responses from people who participated in
"Marnita's Table Community Events,"
supported by Catalyst Initiative:

100% of participants "felt welcome."

100% of participants "would share impact."

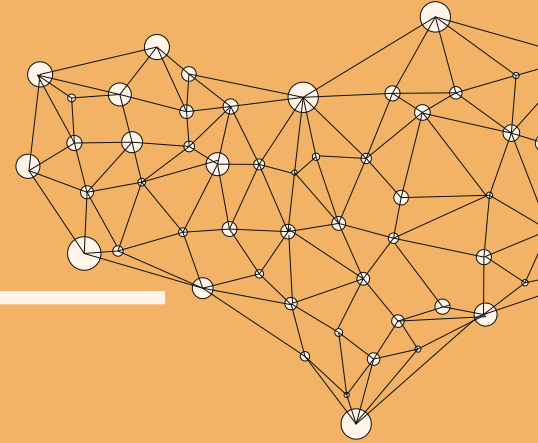
94% of participants "met someone across
differences."

92% of participants "learned a new practice."

77% of participants "want to or would come
again."

77% of participants "would invite others."

THEORY



While this isn't typical of an evaluation report, we decided to present the **Theory of Change** that emerged through the evaluation process as a poem. We hope you will carry the profound beauty, power, and poetry of this work with you as you read this report.

CATALYST INITIATIVE'S THEORY OF CHANGE: A LOVE POEM

See the horizon, and
stay present in the right now.

In every moment,
know where your horizon is.

When the journey changes
and the trajectory shifts,
practice self-awareness.
Shift and pivot.

Pull forward strength from your
ancestors.

Believe in and nurture your
human potential,

your brilliance, and resilience.

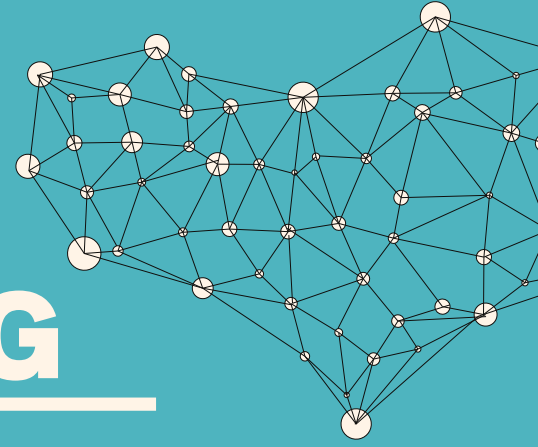
Transform the darkness into
light.

Plant seeds of
hope and inspiration for your
descendants.

Stay focused on the horizon.
Align and re-align with your
highest potential.

Believe and let go of
expectations.

CONDITIONS FOR HEALING



To create and sustain Catalyst Initiative, space for healing had to be created and maintained. Healing doesn't happen just because people have been listened to, convened, or "invested" in with time, ideas, and money. Healing only happens when organizations and individuals intentionally cultivate and nurture the conditions that make healing possible. Table 1 outlines the conditions for healing that emerged during Catalyst Initiative.

Table 1: Conditions* for Healing

Condition 1. Grace and forgiveness are given freely.

Condition 2. Journeys of all kinds are welcome.

Condition 3. Healing is treated as both an individual and collective act.

Condition 4. Self-care and healing are culturally-rooted.

Condition 5. Wholeness is invited and celebrated.

Condition 6. Believe in the human capacity to heal.

*The numbering of the conditions is for ease of use only. All conditions are of equal importance.

The remainder of this section uses quotes to illustrate—in community members' own words—why these conditions are important.

CONDITION 1

grace and forgiveness are given freely

Transforming networks from a dominant paradigm to one centered on wellbeing requires intention, commitment, perseverance, care, forgiveness, and grace for others and ourselves. It must allow for exploration without blame or shame. Partners shared:



We're learning not only how to do our healing work but how to create a culture where people don't go into shame when someone points out something...It doesn't always happen easily, but we're beginning to create that culture amongst ourselves, and then deliver it in story mode to whatever group we're working with. (Irreducible Grace REM Participant)

CONDITION 2

journeys of all kinds are welcome

Sometimes healing practices have been interrupted, stolen, and/or forgotten, and the healing work needs to begin with building, rebuilding, or repairing a foundation. Once on the healing path, people will take their own individual and collective journeys, at their own pace and in their own ways. Throughout the evaluation process, it was clear that personal journeys and growth were catalyzed through accompaniment. This means that Catalyst Initiative and partners walked together on these journeys with acceptance, connection, healing, trust, leadership, and a sense of community.



What she found that was really powerful was more of the holistic approach that was being used in that space, to allow for deep listening as well as other folks to be heard. It was really powerful and she is grateful and proud of being able to create a space for people to be affirmed and to be heard. (Joi Unlimited REM Participant)

CONDITION 3

healing is treated as both an individual and collective act

A premise of the Catalyst Initiative is that healing work requires ongoing, intentional, and culturally meaningful self-care, trauma-healing, and resilience-building at both individual and community levels. Participants we spoke with agreed. They shared that while the focus on the individual is important and appreciated, the focus on the collective is equally important and often overlooked. As one person shared, “It takes a collective to move forward—someone to believe when others aren't so sure.”



This program [for Somali women] goes beyond health and wellness and gives a safe place to process trauma, share what's in the heart, and begin to heal. (Intercultural Alliance with Circles of Health REM Participant)

CONDITION 4

self-care and healing are culturally-rooted

Catalyst Initiative is a national resource that fosters culturally authentic self-care practices to advance health and wellbeing. The Initiative invested in adapting healing practices in culturally specific ways, making these practices more accessible and meaningful to people in their communities. The participants we spoke with agreed that culturally responsive/authentic support is essential to creating a network of wellbeing.



We are working on developing a culturally tailored workbook to train individuals on Mind-Body Medicine practices. We are in the process of recruiting a contractor to help [the Native American Community Clinic] develop the curriculum, however, we are confident that this will be completed in 2022. (Catalyst Initiative Partner)

CONDITION 5

wholeness is invited and celebrated

Participants expressed how important it was to invite wholeness into the healing process. This wholeness was expressed in many different ways. Examples are offered below.



Individual: One participant shared that they continually ask, *"How do I take the time to make myself whole to bring all that I am to the work I am doing?"*

Family: One participant noted, *"A whole family, an entire generation, is healing...I am interrupting historical trauma."*

A Congregation: One person shared, *"Participants [in our congregation] witnessed powerful inter-generational connections and transformation."*

CONDITION 6

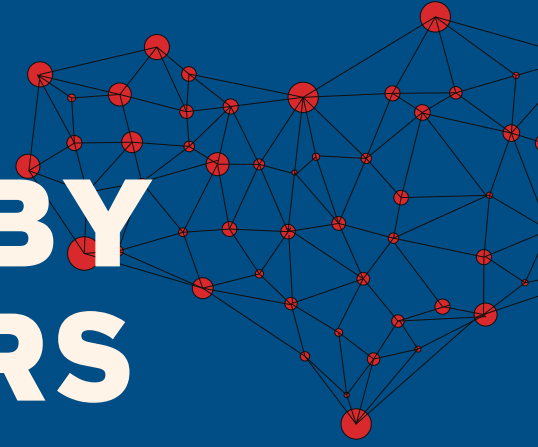
believe in the human capacity to heal

A belief in the human capacity to heal allows people to imagine and move beyond simply surviving and step fully into thriving by nurturing their bodies, minds, and spirits. Moving out of hurt and fear and into hope and possibility creates new opportunities.



When you have spaciousness and latitude you can do great things. But when you're in survival mode all the time because of your own traumatic history, or because of the deep trauma ...that is part of our environment right now, or a combination thereof, and you don't have good practices and you don't have good support networks, and you have...all the wounds that come from all that and we react from a place of hurt and fear.
(Catalyst Initiative Partner)

SNAPSHOT: BY THE NUMBERS



In 2016, Catalyst Initiative hosted *Building Resilience: Restoring our Human Capacity to Heal* at RiverCenter in St. Paul, Minnesota. Over 300 people from various walks of life participated to affirm the innate capacity we carry within to heal from trauma, build resilience, and be well.

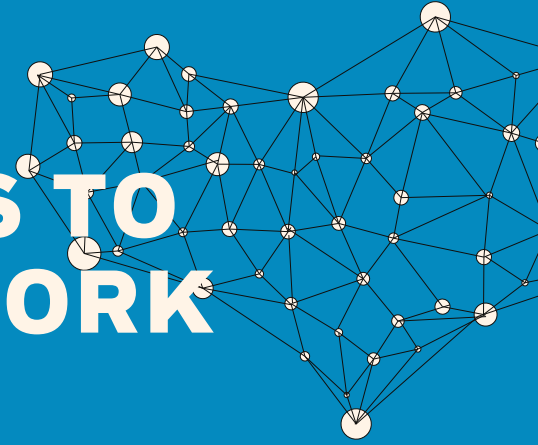
More than 80% of survey respondents from the event reported that the event was meaningful, productive, and that they would share take-aways regarding resiliency and healing from trauma with others.



One attendee shared:

It's refreshing being around so many people who, although diverse, as a group share a mutual understanding of this way of thinking and living as well as a strong belief in our human capacity to heal within and as a community through giving love and receiving love.

CORE STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP A NETWORK OF WELLBEING



Ripple Effect Mapping (REM) was selected as a primary method for this evaluation because it aligns both with the values of Catalyst Initiative and the purpose of the evaluation. A ripple, defined as a small wave in water caused by an object being dropped into it, aptly describes what we heard from participants. Catalyst Initiative “dropped in” support for culturally-rooted self-care, and each of these “drops” rippled beyond the initial support. These ripples, like ripples in water, are uneven and unpredictable. They are circular, travel through physical and energetic pathways, and are sensitive to the environments around them. They cannot be held still or owned by any one person.

As we looked across ripples as defined by evaluation participants (Catalyst Initiative funding partners), we saw patterns emerge. The results of the comprehensive qualitative data analysis outlined in this section provide valuable insights into these patterns, which are ripples that emanated from six core strategies used by Catalyst Initiative.

Each of the core strategies (see Table 2) is described in this section, followed by a description of the ripples it created. The ripples can be thought of as both impacts and community-adopted and adapted strategies. Quotes are shared to give the reader a sense of what these findings look and sound like in community members’ own words.

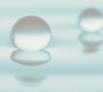


Table 2: Core Strategies* to Develop a Network of Wellbeing

Strategy 1. Energize and resource community members to reach back and cast forward.

Strategy 2. See and believe in people and their vision.

Strategy 3. Center on the lived realities of people and communities.

Strategy 4. Promote healing grounded In radical self-care.

Strategy 5. Partner and innovate in relationship to change systems.

Strategy 6. Bridge Western and Traditional ideas and ideals.

*The numbering of the strategies is for ease of use only. All insights are of equal importance.



Catalyst Initiative is best thought of as **a network of people attracted to culturally-rooted healing work**, rather than as a funder or a series of programs. Catalyst Initiative facilitated events with the hope and intention that participants will transmit what they learn into their own communities. Catalyst Initiative does not “own” the concepts or process, but instead encourages ownership and adaptation by community members.

Strategy 1 in Action: The Ripples

A. Catalyst Initiative offers resources without requiring particular outcomes

Funders often convene community members, then measure success by the creation of a partnership with SMART goals. Catalyst did it differently: they created opportunities for people to come together where the only goals were connecting, energizing, and catalyzing. Catalyst Initiative intentionally created opportunities for partners *without* requiring particular outcomes.

One person shared how this strategy allowed them the spaciousness to co-create, and that the co-creation process allowed for new leaders to emerge:



When you build something that hasn't been there before, there isn't a recipe or roadmap. There needs to be time for trial and iteration, and the vitality of the folks working on the project also must be supported. To be supportive of young people and the changes they can make, also means supporting what they [partners] need to be able to step into their leadership and co-create with each other.
(Catalyst Initiative Partner)

B. People come together and are energized, connected, and inspired

Energy, connection, and inspiration are parts of a complex family tree of emotion often grouped together as joy or happiness. Recent research indicates that these emotions can be more consciously generated, provide benefits to cognition and wellbeing, and can be transmitted to others.

Catalyst Initiative partners repeatedly used the word *energy* to signal something positive:

- *"I was energized."*
- *"I tapped into my creative energy."*
- *"I felt energetic healing."*
- *"I was following the 'spark' of energy and intuition."*

C. People carry the energy and ideas forward into their sphere of influence

Again and again, participants shared that energy was a valid and meaningful ingredient which propelled them to take action and carry the work further. One person described their work with Catalyst as an "energy exchange" and described that this energy, *"thrusters you towards the vision so that you...find yourself positioned adjacent to a possibility that was too far out of reach before."*



Suzanne Koepplinger co-created and sustained Catalyst Initiative by finding people she believed in, listening to them deeply, and encouraging them and their vision. This is the work of a **network weaver**. Effective network weavers expand and deepen relationships, build network leadership and a network mindset, and create and maintain a communication ecosystem (Holley, 2018). They work to increase the number, quality, and functions of *nodes* (which can include people, groups or organizations), by understanding, fostering, and strengthening connections within a network or across multiple networks. Network weavers require a particular set of social, emotional, and cognitive skills, as well as energy and resources, to connect individuals to a shared vision.

Strategy 2 in Action: The Ripples

A. Listen deeply, see the vision, and believe

Most of the first year of Catalyst Initiative's existence was dedicated to listening. The George Family Foundation gave Koepplinger, "the gift of nine months of asking people in communities with the highest health disparities throughout Minnesota (veterans; gender non-conforming people; Black, Brown, and Indigenous people) what they need." This listening, which was core to Catalyst's beginnings, is still practiced by Koepplinger. The people she funds often remark on how much it meant to them that she took the time to listen, to see their vision, and to believe in its potential even if they didn't yet have "proof" that their vision was achievable:



[Suzanne] provided her both a listening ear and also the... support in growing this fragile vision that she had.
(Intercultural Alliance with Circles of Health REM Participant)

B. Belief in people creates opportunities for them to engage in a different way of being and working

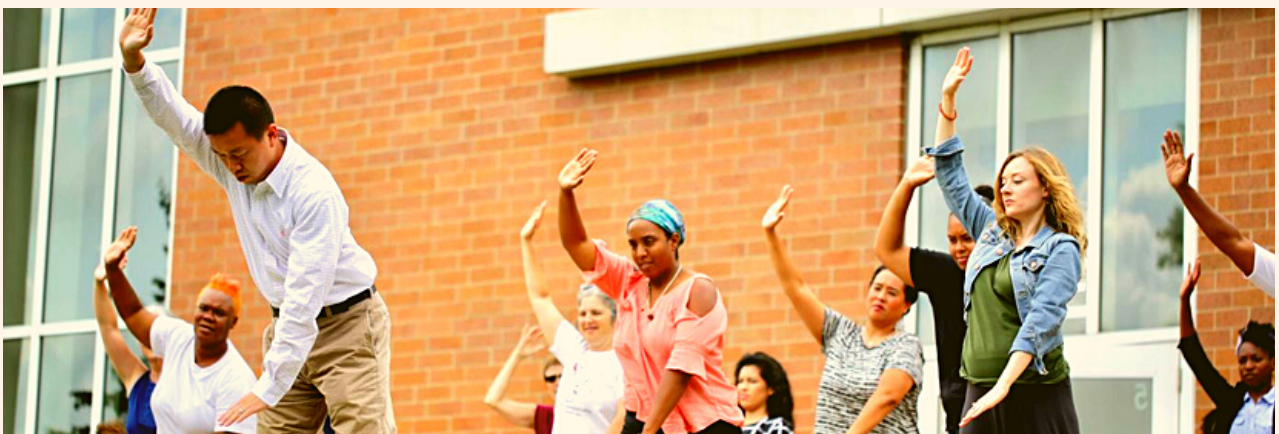
Catalyst initiative demonstrated that different ways of engagement were possible and sustainable. Once participants experienced open-ended, generative, and relationship-driven approaches to healing, they carried the Catalyst Initiative model into other communities and programs.



UROC [Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center] has shaped the University of Minnesota for different ways of doing research...through the language and embodied practices. I see it all over the place. And it has been remarkable. It is people like Suzanne and funders who have vision about this space. Vision becomes practice—living thought and practice happening at the same time. (Liberty Northside Healing Space REM Participant)

C. People doing this “different” work are able to extend listening, seeing, and believing to other people

For example, patients feel safe and trusting when they see and talk with chaplains who speak their language and understand their culture and religion. They described an experience of *“I see you, you see me, and that lets us enter into a different kind of relationship.”*



While marginalized communities have typically been excluded from access to money and resources, they also have the most information and knowledge about their own lived experiences. Catalyst Initiative strives to include people in communities as facilitators, communicators, and decision-makers. It also aims to make philanthropy more accountable, transparent, and responsive. Catalyst Initiative allies with communities and organizations by contributing not only monetary resources, but the collective time, knowledge, skills, and access to the entire network.

Strategy 3 in Action: The Ripples

A. Be clear and unapologetic about supporting communities “in greatest need”

Catalyst Initiative sponsored numerous events focused on those in greatest need. For example, Marnita’s Table hosted an average of four events per year, and this number would likely have been higher if not for the pandemic. Overall, 3,370 participants attended events between 2015 and 2021, including offerings ranging from “Healing from Trauma” to “Healing Trauma in the African Diaspora” to “Youth Cultural Healing.” Although demographic information was not available for all participants, 52% of attendees self-identified as Indigenous, Black, or People of Color (IBPOC), and 25% were youth.

B. Ask community members what they need.

In learning about communities, Suzanne Koepplinger asked a simple but powerful set of questions: What does integrative health and healing mean to you? Who are your healers? How can we support your efforts to heal in your own ways, in your own communities?



They...became truly a measurement of ‘is this important, is this worthy, are we this, and should we shine this on to others?’ So, I think that’s one of the innovative spaces that they found with Catalyst....It was about, ‘How deep and how rich can this be?’ (White Earth Land Recovery Project REM Participant)

C. Offer opportunities that are specifically resonant with and relevant to these communities

Healing work was taught and shared in multiple ways to increase its reach across communities, cultures, geographies, and generations. For example, grants awarded included one to OM Collaborative to create a community wellness coaching model in the African-American community, and to Ampersand Families to support the use of a holistic mind-body approach to help adopted teens heal from trauma.

One specific opportunity participants acknowledged was the seed grants. These grants allowed communities to build upon the vision of healthier populations through mind-body-spirit work that was meaningful to them. These grants were also instrumental in helping people's initiatives or organizations stabilize and grow:



...and Catalyst really allowed them to establish their foundation and to stabilize the organization, that it allowed her to hire staff and not work small contract to small contract ... over the years, the work that they've done with... 'Healing from Trauma' work has expanded internationally... They are continuing to expand and do more work with health foundations, and health systems. That's their ripple and their impact, beyond the community and the personal to the wider system impact.
(Marnita's Table REM Participant)

An important commitment Catalyst Initiative made was to find ways to fund non-501(c)(3) organizations. When 501(c)(3) status is required, the requirement acts as a gatekeeper: people with the resources and cultural inclination to organize this way get funded, and those who organize differently may not receive funding.

D. Grantees created culturally meaningful self-care, trauma-healing, and resilience tools

Grantees developed deeper and broader connections supportive of their health and wellbeing, including spiritual and cultural links. This allowed them to create powerful tools such as a video series for schoolchildren and a Muslim Chaplaincy model. It also allowed them to do work “as,” and not “for.”:

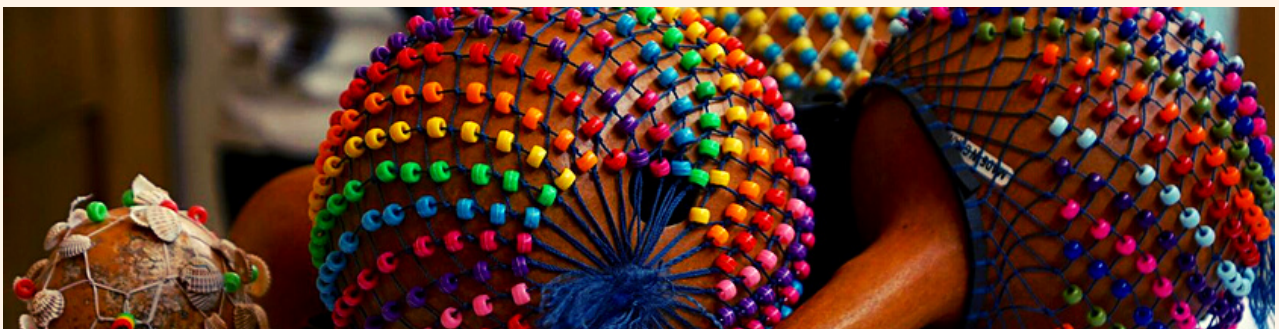


In every elementary or middle school classroom I’ve worked with, I’ve gotten the surprise response that ‘You are the Yoga Teacher?’ They relax when they see me. There is definitely something about not being a white yoga teacher. Walking in as a Black yoga teacher has an effect on students. Just my presence. (Catalyst Initiative Partner)

E. Organizations and initiatives stabilize and/or grow while leaders emerge



He was able to—through the support of Suzanne—go to the Center for Mind-Body medicine. He became a certified coach, then a faculty member with Mind-Body Medicine. He created an intersection between the belief system of Islamic cultures and mind-body medicine so that he could sort of enter and impact the Somali community. From that translation...he created a variety of places that people could go to get services. (Open Path Resources REM Participant)



Catalyst Initiative promoted strategies that helped stakeholders care for themselves and others.

Strategy 4 in Action: The Ripples

A. Catalyst Initiative invests in healers

Catalyst Initiative invited its partners to explore “the profound connection between how our relationship with ourselves deeply influences the way we are in the world.” Community members were offered spaces to experience safety, curiosity, vulnerability, and openness related to their wellbeing.

“

*It was very much a gift for me to be able to go through this certification process and be able to present this to the community and give back to the community. And it's been four or five years since I initially started it. It's something that I practice every day. It's something that I teach to people every day. **And it's now a way of me being in the world....*** (White Earth Land Recovery Project REM Participant)



B. Healers recognize and more deeply understand the relationship between their wellbeing and the work they do in the world

An integral part of this work is to foster an understanding of the benefits and importance of self-care, trauma-healing, and well-being. In other words, healers must heal themselves first.

“

And she [Suzanne] gave us, and personally, me, permission to really understand healing as a necessary part of the work that we do...we can talk about healing in a way we couldn't have 10 years ago because of how she brought it to [our] attention. I think personally, too, we have so integrated it within our organization and in ourselves and in our staff, that it's really who we are and how we do what we do. (Liberty North Side Healing Space REM Participant)

C. Healers make shifts to better align outer action with inner wellbeing

Outer action is aligned with inner wellbeing:

“

...It all starts with our own healing, doesn't it? I mean it really does...in meeting our own imperfections and taking breaths. And just trying to get better so we can do better. (Irreducible Grace REM Participant)

D. Healers in a variety of roles are better prepared to sustain long-term healing work

“

I'm more aware of that fight-flight-freeze response, and then subsequently how to regulate that response. I think I'm able to then use those skills and techniques... in my therapy practice, which is fulfilling for me. (Native American Community Clinic REM Participant)

This was information that my fellow teachers should have. Teachers often interact with students with trauma without the training or tools to use. (Catalyst Initiative Partner)

”

While there are several models of successful networks, all of them require building and maintaining relationships and facilitating collaborations.

Often, philanthropy believes that their efforts can be "scaled up" simply by increasing resources—more money, more locations, more stakeholders—without increasing the capacity of the networks that underlie their system. Network weaving increases impact, scale, and reach by improving the ability of communities to collaborate on issues that affect them.

Strategy 5 In Action: The Ripples

A. Begin the funder-grantee partnership in relationship

Catalyst Initiative began partnerships in relationship. Their role was beyond “granter of money,” and included a commitment to act as a cheerleader, connector, and sounding board. There was a focus on building resilience, healing trauma, and contributing to positive health outcomes at the individual, organizational, and community levels. By its very definition, community-rooted and community-driven work must be responsive, relational, and hold space for uncertainty and emergence.



I was very struck at...the extent to which the community-building that Catalyst committed to (alongside us) really allowed space for emergence, allowed for an opportunity for connections, and new projects, new ideas, new opportunities to really spring forth in generative ways. And in ways that I think—so often it's easy to try to control the outcomes of things, or to come in with a sense of what you expect or what you want to see happen—so, for me it was a radically different way of thinking about how you might work with community, how you might show up to your own work...how you might show up to answer questions together, to solve problems together. (Marnita's Table REM Participant)

B. Partners pursue multiple paths of engagement to increase systemic adoption

Grantees described shifting systems by pursuing multiple paths to increase systemic adoption and access to self-care and trauma-healing. Examples of these include non-narcotic pain management, mind-body medicine and other integrative and holistic health therapies, trauma-healing practices, and truth/reconciliation work.

C. Partnerships expanded and strengthened people and organizations' spheres of influence

Eventually, the work can be scaled by consulting with foundations and other organizations regarding self-care, trauma-healing, resilience, and generative movements. For instance, when asked, "How have your partnerships or network relationships changed since the beginning of this grant period?", one Partner responded:



Our partnership and networks of influence have greatly increased. We are less dependent upon State grants for programming, and have built strong relationships with regional healthcare systems....This work continues to grow and have greater impact upon community. When working with state led programs, the emphasis is upon serving as messenger for state agencies. Through the last year we have found we have much more capacity to ensure that we focus our work on culturally responsive initiatives, those that are community-driven and emphasize community capacity over deficit thinking. (Catalyst Initiative Partner)

D. Partnerships allowed organizations to leverage additional resources

Funding from and the relationship with Catalyst Initiative ultimately allowed many organizations to leverage additional funding:

“...Catalyst has offered ground-breaking and barrier-breaking work and reputation. It’s leverage for additional funds when [she/Exec Dir] writes a grant. Many look at the list of partners, and Suzanne’s name opens doors.... It has allowed us to partner with the University of Minnesota in a way that we add humanity to an institution.” (Liberty Northside Healing Space REM Participant)

Several philanthropies have risen to the challenge of supporting partners engaged in this work. For example, the Bush Foundation has granted over 1.7 million dollars to Catalyst Initiative partners. In addition, during the past eight years of Catalyst Initiative, the George Family Foundation has invested 4.82 million.



E. Systems Impact

Partners broadened their systems-level impact in communities with resources and support from Catalyst Initiative. For example, Open Path Resources' Muslim Chaplaincy program substantially impacted the quality of care in a healthcare system:

“...it was so much [a] need and high demand that they needed to see someone from their culture and their faith and their language saying, 'I am a chaplain; I work for the hospital.' And then they will share all their needs where they couldn't share with the staff and medical team. (Open Path Resources REM Participant)

In addition, Irreducible Grace Foundation has been able to grow their programs to have a system-wide impact:

“Last year, [she] was saying they got a major grant. But part of that was because they had been funded by Catalyst [Initiative] and then being able to demonstrate the value of the work, then it grew their work, which led them to be in more places. And so, this idea that they have—they were in one school, now they were in 18, and now they're going to be in 20—that's algorithmic spread. (Irreducible Grace Foundation REM Participant)

Catalyst Initiative worked to bring philanthropy into closer alignment with Traditional ideas and values, including time, spirit, and decision-making. They recognized that healing work takes place on a timeline from ancestors to descendants, honors spirit, knits traditional and dominant cultural practices together, and changes language to stay rooted and relevant.

Strategy 6 In Action: The Ripples

A. Recognize that healing work takes place on a timeline from ancestors to descendants

One of the most important aspects to be aware of when doing culturally-rooted work in communities with greatest need is that these communities have been disproportionately impacted by trauma and loss for generations. That trauma and loss is carried into the current generation through memories, DNA, and cultural patterns; it is compounded in people's current lifetimes, and must be addressed. For example, in a Bush Foundation article (Perry, 2021), Suzanne Koepplinger noted that:

“ *The disproportionate impact of COVID on Indian populations has a lot to do with poor health care access, comorbidities, and the high rates of disease in Indian people. We're trying to support the elders who are doing that healing work, so people begin to understand their capacity to own their own wellness. Healing the wounds of historic trauma is the first step.*

One Catalyst Initiative partner stated:

“ *You impact one, you impact the next seven generations, right? And I feel like, you know, as we look at this, the big picture is our future. It's our children; it's our grandchildren; it's the grandchildren of others....Rather than intergenerational trauma being passed along, we're going to pass along intergenerational healing. (White Earth Land Recovery Project REM Participant)*

Spacious timelines allow the work to unfold and grow at the speed of trust rather than at the speed of the funding cycle.



Little by little we can see what's working [in the Somali Circle of Health] and how it is helpful to our bodies.

(Intercultural Alliance with Circles of Health REM Participant)

B. Honor the spirit that guides and connects us

Many Catalyst Initiative partners spoke about the importance of spirit in their work. For example, participants shared that chaplains provide care that goes beyond physical and includes necessary spiritual care, familial support, prayer, and information. A participant from *Intercultural Alliance* said that the sharing of stories was a sharing of mind, body, spirit, and emotions. A participant from *Joi Unlimited* noted that the work created more space in them to listen to themselves—body, mind, and spirit. Finally, people often shared that participating in Catalyst Initiative programming was affirming because they were able to connect with "kindred spirits."

C. Partners find new ways to weave together Traditional and dominant-culture practices

Traditional and dominant-culture practices can be meaningfully and harmoniously combined to honor both, and infuse Traditional practices with new life. For example, a Native Elder who participated in Catalyst Initiative-funded work through the Center for Mind-Body Medicine (CMBM) saw a direct relationship between the teachings through CMBM and their cultural practices. This Elder brought what they learned to other Native Elders at their reservation, with the intention that Elders could become trainers and spread the practice further—with a focus on health and healing on the reservation.

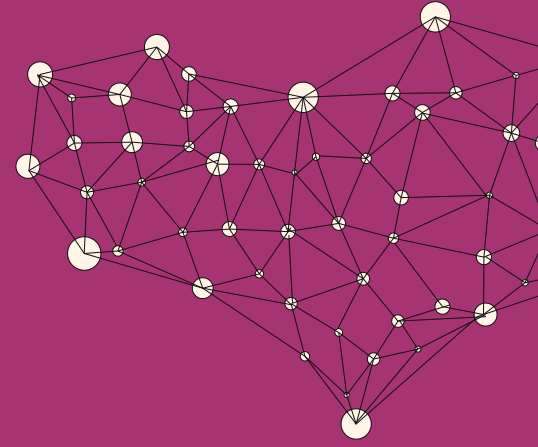
D. The language of the work changes to become more rooted and relevant



This is not something new, it's something that we already know. And it's just re-tapping into—it's re-engaging our bodies to know more about who we are. [...] Doing the inner work basically will solidify in the community. By taking the steps to do the inner work, the self-development—it will trickle out to the community kind of on a micro-macro level.
(Native American Community Clinic REM Participant)



RIPPLES OF IMPACT



Catalyst Initiative partners told us in no uncertain terms that self-care and healing had numerous ripple effects in the community. The combined conditions and strategies outlined in this report led to the following overall network impacts:

Investment in healing work ripples across both space/place (community outward) and time (lifespan and generations) that extend beyond the reach of this evaluation, both forward and backward in time.

More people see inner work and emotional healing of the self as foundational, not as an afterthought.

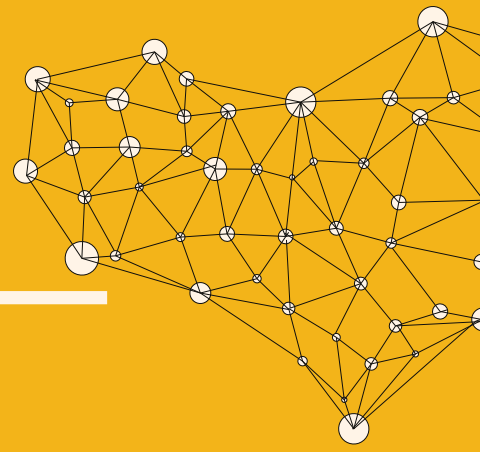
Healing work improves physical, social, mental, and emotional health (e.g., blood pressure, nutrition habits, and feeling more socially supported).

Self-care and healing improves the capacity of people to meet the needs of those they work with and care for.

Learning to self-regulate and identify/set boundaries positively benefits individuals, organizations, and interrelationships.

The community owns the work.

DISCUSSION

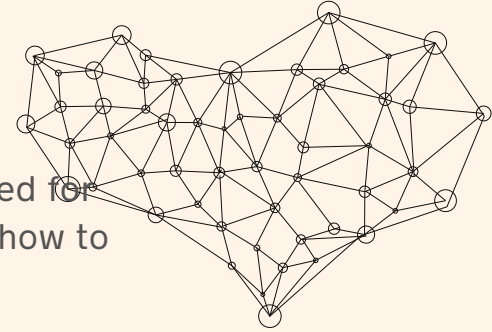


Catalyst Initiative brought visionary community leaders into healing communication and conversation by supporting them with philanthropic resources, time, and energy. As a result, several overlapping things happened: community leaders initiated and sustained communication across the Catalyst Initiative network; community leaders attracted others into self-organized groups (nodes) within Catalyst Initiative; and the self-organized nodes sent out ripples of impact throughout the network and the surrounding communities. In other words, Catalyst Initiative enabled transformative change by sponsoring authentic and meaningful inquiry into wellbeing and self-care. Network members (partners) then adapted and carried what they found meaningful from Catalyst Initiative into other contexts.

As the Director of Catalyst Initiative, Suzanne Koepplinger functioned as a network weaver: a person who works to improve the health, vitality, and resilience of social networks by increasing the number and strength of connections within the network (Holley, 2018). She helped identify needs and challenges, made strategic connections, and promoted self-organization. In addition, she developed an awareness of the values and vision of potential leaders, and encouraged leaders to add their strength to the network. This led to greater network cohesion overall.

As part of this process, Catalyst Initiative centered the development of its network and discussions of wellbeing and self-care around the *lived experiences* of communities and people in need. The term "lived experience" broadens the common idea of "experience" to include both everyday realities of historically marginalized people, and wholly subjective phenomena that they might use to make sense of the world, including

emotion and spirituality. Embracing lived experience, along with linear and non-linear concepts of time, allowed for practical and frank discussions of historical trauma and how to resolve events of the past and promote healing.



Healing and self-care have long been neglected by social change leaders and philanthropy. In *Wellbeing Inspires Welldoing: How Changemakers' Inner Wellbeing Influences Their Work*, Jeff Severns Guntzel and Nora Murphy Johnson describe five values that connect inner development to outer change for people who work for social and environmental good. Catalyst Initiative embodied this by (1) helping stakeholders care for themselves and others; (2) saying yes and returning to yes; (3) experiencing and being open to new relational possibilities; (4) discovering and accepting the whole self; (5) moving towards greater inner wholeness; and (6) aligning inner wellbeing and outer action.

Catalyst Initiative invited community leaders to explore their inner lives in culturally meaningful ways by actively promoting and supporting self-care and healing. Community leaders embraced the opportunity—including doing their own self-work—which allowed them to approach their leadership roles with more curiosity, compassion, and openness, and often an increased enthusiasm for making connections with other leaders. As the network developed, these partners brought others into Catalyst Initiative and carried Catalyst Initiative ideas into other contexts.

The willingness to do one's own inner work should not be taken lightly. There is great risk in being vulnerable. That partners were willing to open themselves to the work can partially be attributed to the trust that was built between them and Suzanne Koepplinger in her role as Director of Catalyst Initiative. Throughout the REM sessions, Partners indicated the implicit understanding that they were being accompanied by Catalyst Initiative on their individual and organizational journeys. Part of the trust was their knowledge that Suzanne was continually exploring her own self and doing her own work, and she therefore understood the risks and rewards of these endeavors. This has implications for people who want to continue on with this work: Community leaders cannot be expected to be open to the vulnerability of doing self-work unless their partners—the philanthropists themselves—aren't also willing to take a deep look at their own inner selves (both professionally and personally). In other words, philanthropists must be willing to "walk the walk" to enable transformative change.

CONCLUSION



This evaluation found that Catalyst Initiative’s approach is a meaningful and impactful alternative to more common approaches to philanthropy. In doing their work, Catalyst Initiative understood that transformational change requires a full partnership with involved communities. In other words, community members must be full contributing partners on any project attempting transformative change. While this concept seems obvious, implementation is less so. Philanthropy and nonprofits share a long history of “doing for” or “working on” certain communities or problems, including Indigenous and/or marginalized groups, and communities experiencing large amounts of conflict.

Successful transformative projects incorporate how people think, interact, and make meaning into the structure, activities, and goals of the network itself, including how individuals situate themselves within family, community, and culture. In light of this, Catalyst Initiative cultivated relationships within the context of the history and culture of communities. They adjusted to new ideas (ideas new to Catalyst Initiative), as well as the effects of oppression or alienation on its partners. This led to discussions not only about appropriate actions and resources, but on how existing attitudes might change over time.

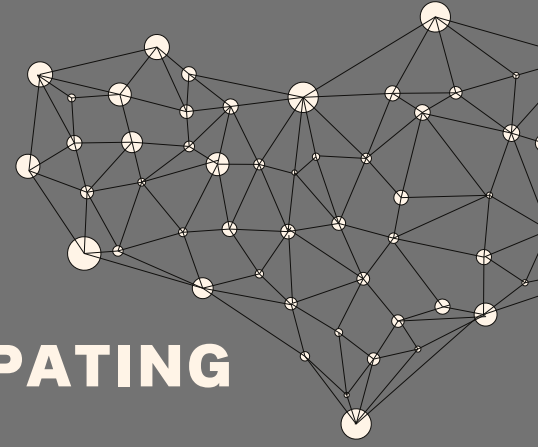
Finally, the network evaluation was designed to answer practical questions, guide decision-making, and solve problems. Partners joined together to retrospectively and visually map the chain of effects resulting from their partnership with Catalyst Initiative. This developmental evaluation reinforced the full partnership as it focused on the emergence of salient themes and ideas, as well as on how partners could actually utilize results in their continuing work.

Through robust partnerships and network weaving, Catalyst Initiative transformed communities, organizations, and individuals into a strong and dynamic network that honors and fosters wellbeing and authentic self-care. Members of the network adapted and transmitted the ideas of Catalyst Initiative into new contexts and spaces. They moved beyond simply surviving to step fully into thriving: nurturing bodies, minds, and spirits.



APPENDIX A

ORGANIZATIONS PARTICIPATING IN REM SESSIONS



Healing Illuminated

Healing Illuminated is led by Rebeka Ndosi, holistic health practitioner, yoga instructor, facilitator, and community leader. Programs focus on Black communities, assisting BIPOC children and families to engage in self-care to learn how to regulate stress and decrease the effects of trauma. Healing Illuminated aspires to teach Black and Brown folx to lead and facilitate more healing in their own communities.

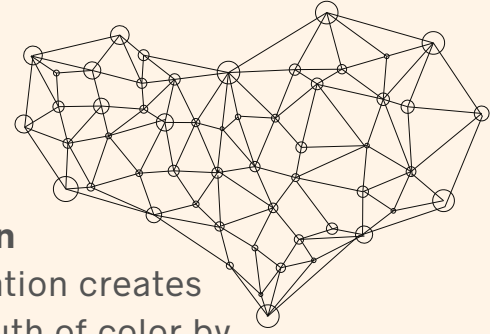
<https://www.facebook.com/healingilluminated>

Intercultural Alliance (with Somali Women's Circle of Health)

Intercultural Alliance aims to Improve the health and well-being of refugee and immigrant communities in Minnesota. The Somali Women's Circle of Health was developed to offer a holistic approach to transcultural health through community and cultural-based programs and strategies in preventative care and education, and to expand access to health information and services for immigrant families through comprehensive transcultural health programs.

<http://interculturalalliance.com/aboutus/>





Irreducible Grace Foundation

The Irreducible Grace Foundation creates safe spaces for healing for youth of color by providing mentoring, life skills, self-care practices, and employment. The Foundation uses visual and performing arts and movement techniques to help young people learn new skills for dealing with stress and trauma, and to foster their voices. They also work with youth who are in chronic need of support, many of whom have come through the foster care system.

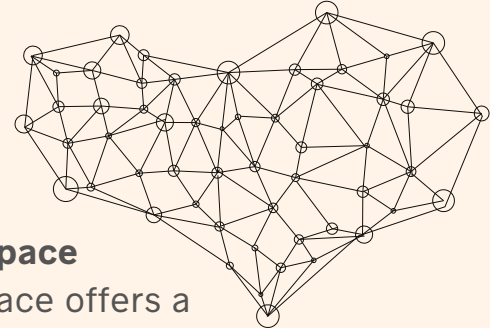
<https://www.irgrace.org/about>



Joi Unlimited and Healing Justice Foundation

Joi Unlimited promotes transformation of self and systems through the process of the Orange Method (OM). Joi Unlimited focuses on radical self-care and the intentional practice of attending to body, mind, and soul in ways that oppose the forces of oppression that keep people exhausted and sick. Programs include coaching, workshops, and consultations with founder Dr. Joi Lewis.

<https://joiunlimited.com/about-joi-unlimited/>



Liberty Northside Healing Space

Liberty Northside Healing Space offers a community-driven solution to healing the trauma that exists in North Minneapolis, rooted in deep community wisdom, ancient healing practices, foundational beliefs in the African American church, and participatory research—specifically around the issue of commercial sexual exploitation and its corrosive connections to enslavement.



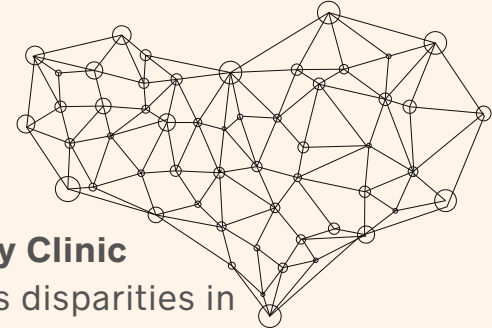
<https://libertychurchmpls.org/northside-healing-space/>

Marnita's Table

Marnita's Table brings people together across race, class, culture, and other means of self-identity to find common ground on important public policy issues. Marnita's Table creates spaces where the unvoiced can find voice, and fosters connections across systems to better respond to inequities across healthcare, education and social justice. They do this by providing folks with the tools and environment (over a shared meal and facilitated conversations) to collaborate and connect more freely across differences.



<https://www.marnitastable.org/faq/>



Native American Community Clinic

Originated in 2003 to address disparities in the Native American communities, the Native American Community Clinic (NACC) promotes health and wellness of mind, body, and spirit in Native American communities. They value health and tradition, provide high quality care regardless of the ability to pay, and aim to increase health equity for Native American families in the Twin Cities.

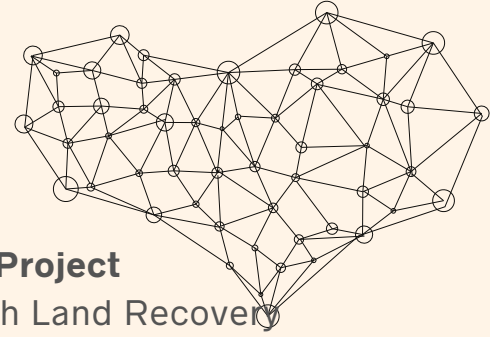
www.nacc-healthcare.org



Open Path Resources

Closely associated with the Islamic Civic Society of America, Open Path Resources focuses on the Muslim American/East African immigrant communities within Minnesota to build their capacity to serve as wise civic leaders within a democracy. Work is across fields of healthcare, government relations, business development, and interfaith relations. Key topics addressed include diabetes, breast and cervical cancer screening, mind/body wellness, trauma-informed care, and the value of Muslim chaplains in hospitals.

<https://oprnmn.org/what-we-do/>



White Earth Land Recovery Project

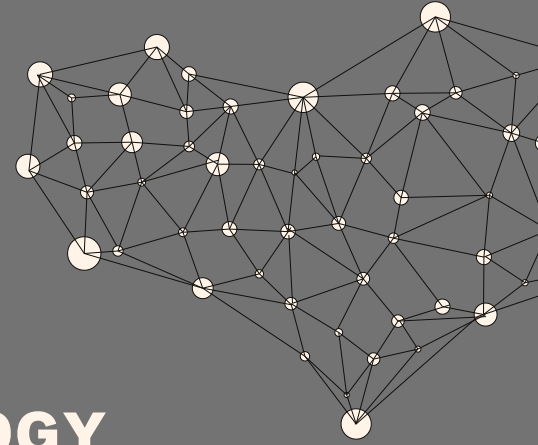
The mission of the White Earth Land Recovery Project is to facilitate the recovery of the original land base of the White Earth Indian Reservation while preserving and restoring traditional practices of sound land stewardship, language fluency, community development, and strengthening spiritual and cultural heritage.

<https://www.welrp.org/about-welrp/>



APPENDIX B

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

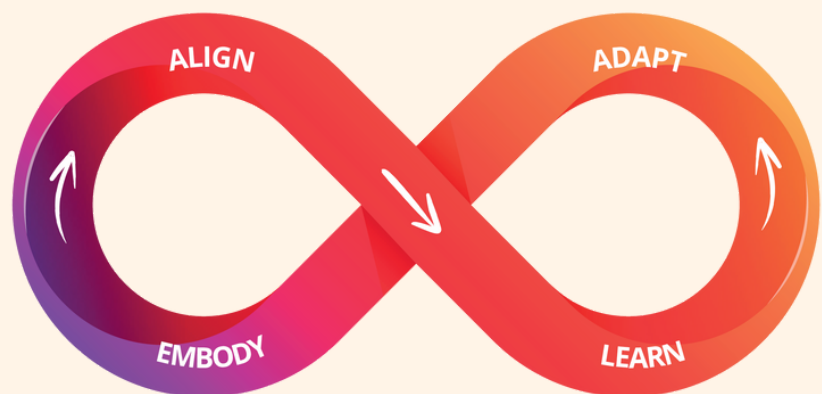


About Creative Evaluation and Engagement

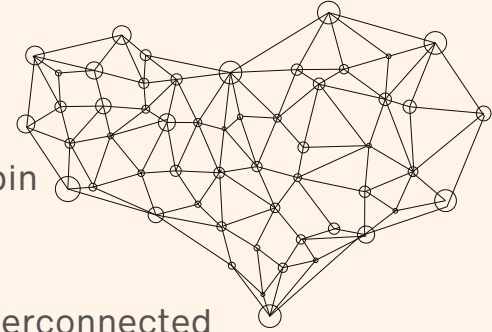
Evaluation—systematically collecting, analyzing, and using the information to answer questions about programs and initiatives—comes in all shapes and sizes. Evaluation is typically asked to determine whether or not some sort of intervention succeeded and why (or why not). Interventions might include public health campaigns, anti-poverty efforts, education reforms, environmental awareness, and equity and diversity initiatives. Different types of evaluations use different methods, including surveys, interviews, focus groups, and observations. But those approaches don't always work. The lived experiences, emotions, history, and culture of a community often determine how people act and make decisions more than programs and interventions.

Because of this, Inspire to Change developed a new framework for evaluation called Creative Evaluation and Engagement (CE&E). This framework, based upon Michael Quinn Patton's Creative Evaluation work (Patton, 1981; Patton, 2010; Patton, 2017; Patton & Campbell Patton, 2022), supports adaptive, culturally-rooted, inspiring, co-creative change. CE&E helps understand what matters to people and communities, and how to motivate positive social change.

Creative Evaluation & Engagement was selected as the evaluation approach, in part, because the foundation and assumptions of CE&E



are aligned with the values and assumptions that underpin Catalyst Initiative.



CE&E is an interactive, continuous process with four interconnected phases: Align, Learn, Adapt, and Embody (see Figure). Each of these processes incorporates essential elements to be carried out during the evaluation process.

Defining the Evaluation Purpose

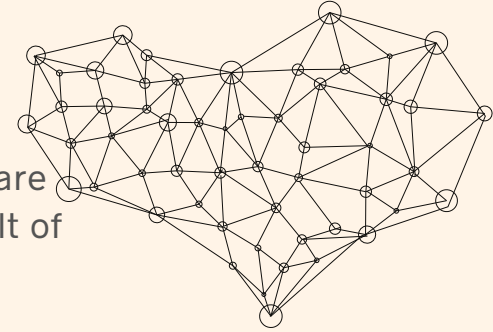
Initially, a core team of people from Catalyst Initiative and Inspire to Change came together to develop and plan the evaluation. A series of four 2-hour meetings were held in early 2021 to share the group's origin story and current circumstances, brainstorm what it meant for learning and evaluation, determine who they should be learning from and why, and develop a plan.

The planning group decided that the primary purpose of the partnership was to engage in a 9-month impact evaluation that answers the evaluation questions as listed below and in the introduction of this report. Secondary purposes of the evaluation were to surface “new” or more accessible language and metaphors; more clearly define and articulate purposes, principles, patterns, and practices; and find a way to communicate the “whole” of the work to partners who have been contributing to Catalyst Initiative's work or to people who are learning about it for the first time.

It was important that the core team not only define a purpose that was in alignment with Catalyst Initiative's values and assumptions, but that the *methods* also reflect alignment. The core team identified that the methods selected should have the purpose of: 1) capturing both intended and unintended impacts; 2) honoring the complex and multifaceted nature of this work; and 3) surfacing important qualities not always captured in evaluations such as “spark,” “energy,” “love,” “purpose,” and “trust.”

Crafting Questions

For this evaluation, Inspire to Change facilitated a Creative Evaluation and Engagement approach to learning that sought to understand the meaningfulness and reach of Catalyst Initiative's investment in self-care and healing.



The overarching evaluation question was: What impact are self-care and healing having in the community as a result of direct or indirect support from Catalyst Initiative?

This question was further delineated with the following four questions. To what extent and in what ways has Catalyst Initiative:

- fostered understanding about the benefits and importance of self-care, trauma-healing, and well-being?
- connected networks and leadership that embed culturally authentic healing practices in communities?
- championed policies, practices, and investments that advance self-care as primary care?
- boldly invested in promising practices in self-care and healing?

Gathering Data

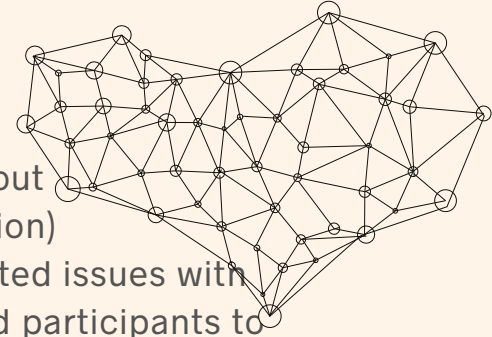
The following methods were selected for gathering data:

Ripple Effect Mapping (REM)

REM is a group participatory method for impact evaluation that engages program and community stakeholders to retrospectively and visually map the chain of effects resulting from a program or complex collaboration (Washburn et al., 2020). For this evaluation, nine REM sessions including participants from nine different organizations were organized and facilitated between June and July of 2021. During these sessions, participants (from the same organization or in mixed groups depending on the session) interviewed each other in pairs via virtual breakout rooms. Sharing their stories with each other allowed individuals to find commonalities, unique outcomes, and learnings, and to validate their own stories of individual and community healing. For the breakout interviews, participants were asked to address the following questions:

1. How has Catalyst Initiative made an impact on you personally?
2. How has Catalyst Initiative made an impact on your community?

Following the paired story-sharing interviews, the full group came together, and each participant was given time to tell their partner's stories. After each story was told, the person who told the story was asked if they



had anything to add. During this time, facilitators filled out a “ripple map” (using a Miro whiteboard virtual application) in real-time, giving details of each story and linking related issues with arrows. When the map was completed, facilitators asked participants to brainstorm themes they felt arose during the storytelling. Later, Zoom recordings and notes were used to fill in any missing information, and visual ripple maps were printed and examined for additional themes by REM facilitators. Finally, a concluding “Crescendo” meeting with all nine organizations was hosted by one of the participating organizations to elicit final thoughts about the role Catalyst Initiative has had in their work; additional ideas were synthesized and added to the information obtained through the REM sessions.

Document Review

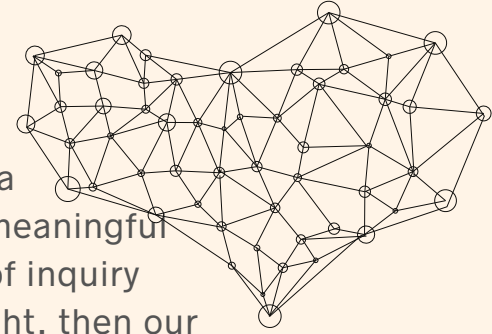
In addition to input from the advisory group and stories from REM participants, Inspire to Change reviewed Catalyst Initiative evaluation documents from over the past five years. These documents provided retrospective information that might not otherwise have been revealed. The review gave insight into Catalyst Initiative projects from those who participated closer to the time of the events and provided “color” and context to the work.

Reflective Practice

Reflective Practice entailed building in a period of reflective practice throughout the evaluation process, allowing key members of the Catalyst community to actively engage with, learn from, and respond to the results.

Analyzing the Data

We often think of research as a systematic investigation—including research development, testing, and evaluation—designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge. Research is a specialized field requiring years of training at an institute of higher education, where students learn their discipline’s norms, values, and methods. Researchers apply their skills to complex, real-world problems, from energy production to vaccines. When we conceive of research and researchers under this paradigm, most Americans will never be thought of as researchers, as they have no opportunity to pursue a graduate or professional degree.



Arjun Appadurai (2006) argues that research should be a human right: the right to ask important questions, find meaningful answers, and make strategic decisions. If we conceive of inquiry (including research and evaluation) as a basic human right, then our methods of inquiry, analysis, and decision-making must adapt and adjust for each person in every community. In fact, our idea of what terms like systematic investigation or knowledge can contain expand to include credible ways of knowing, being, deciding, and communicating across a spectrum of identities, lived experiences, and aspirations.

Inspire to Change recognizes the value of professional researchers and evaluators, and we recognize that everyone researches, everyone evaluates, and everyone has the right to make strategic decisions based on their own credible inquiry. Throughout this process, the evaluation team collected and analyzed data from multiple sources.

Making Sense

Once collected, data were prepared for data analysis. MAXQDA (VERBI, 2019), a qualitative data analysis software package, was used for all data analyses. The main goal of qualitative data analysis is to explain, understand, and interpret the “how” and “why” of a situation or process (MAXQDA Research Blog, 2018). Complex or large volumes of data such as those collected during the Ripple Effect Mapping exercises can be more easily analyzed with this type of software, as it enables the organization, management, and retrieval of data through automatic search, coding, and data visualization functions.

The Inspire to Change Team

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Sandra Agustín

janeen Manuel

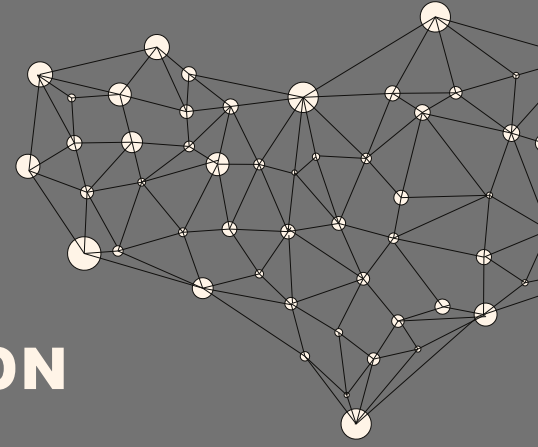
Nancy Plaskett

Shanthi Cambala

Arianna Diaz-Celon

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE REM FACILITATION PLAN



Introduction to Session and Invitation

Welcome & Acknowledgement

Agreements

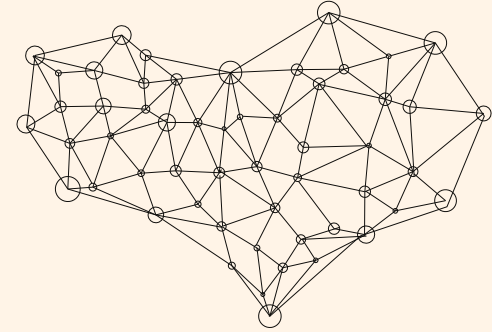
- This session will be recorded for learning/sharing.
- Your stories are a gift. You choose what to give.
- Listen generously.
- Leave space for all voices to be heard.

Why Ripple Effect Mapping (REM)?

- REM was created about 10 years ago by Scott Chazdon and folks at Cooperative Extension.
- REM is a visual way to see and understand the intended and unintended results of a complex initiative on individuals, groups, organizations, and communities.

As evaluators, why do we value REM?

- It captures the impacts of complex or evolving work.
- It provides opportunities for reflection and celebrating successes.
- It captures what relationships can lead to as an important and meaningful outcome.
- It re-energizes and engages people through story, and helps them see and understand that they are part of something larger that is catalyzing change.
- Both the stories and the discovery of themes and patterns across stories are surfaced by people at the gathering.
- It is something that can be learned and then used within your own initiatives.



Participant Introductions

Please share your name/pronoun/role and something on the heart (spoken sentence stems).

Individual Journaling - Appreciative Inquiry

- Share one or more significant personal accomplishments, successes, or connections from your involvement with Catalyst Initiative.
- Share one or more significant organizational or community accomplishments, successes, or connections from your involvement with Catalyst.

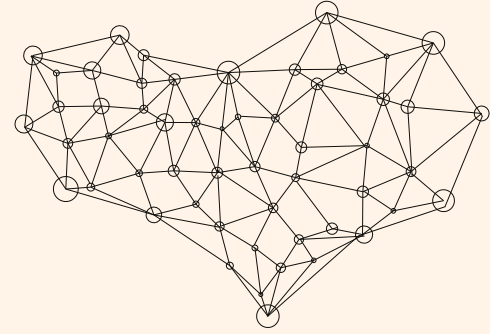
Paired Interviews - Deep Listening (Break-out Rooms)

“We are going into paired interviews now. When you get into your group, please choose one person to go first, and one to go second. The first speaker will have 4 minutes to share one or more significant personal accomplishments, successes, or connections, based on your involvement with Catalyst Initiative. The second person will be listening and asking for more detail. After 4 minutes, the first person will share organizational or community accomplishments. Again, the second person will be listening and asking for more detail. After the next four minutes pass, we will switch and the first speaker will become the listener.

When you come back, each of you will share one personal and one organizational/community story from your partner. We'll be mapping these visually and creating a collective 'map.' Please tell only stories that you are comfortable sharing; know that if at any time you decide that you don't want your story shared—even if it's in the middle of the mapping exercise—there will be no problem for us to stop sharing and move on. You can tell your partner during the breakout dyad not to share, speak up in the main room, or send a direct message to anyone on the team and we will intervene.”

Group Mapping

- Participants tell each other's stories in the larger group
- Facilitator Roles during storytelling: One person facilitates, one person maps in Miro (the mapping software), and one person keeps a running list of themes/notes



Group Analysis

The group works together to identify key themes

Closing/Next Steps

- Plan for reconnecting for additional information (interviews, data, other supporting materials)
- Intention of coming together as a large group
- Commitment to participants:
 - We will send a link to the recording in case you want to re-watch or share.
 - We will add additional detail to the Map and share it with everyone later in the week.
 - We will work with you to schedule and convene a REM about your own work for your group if you desire it.
 - We will convene in-person to share what we learned across all of the groups.

APPENDIX D

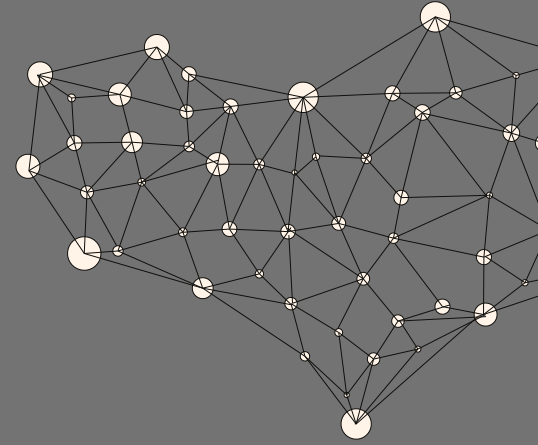
SAMPLE REM MAP



This simplified example of a Ripple Effect Map was created using Miro Whiteboard software. After hearing each others' stories during partner dyads in Zoom breakout rooms, participants told their partner's personal and community stories in the main room with all participants present. As they did so, the information was recorded in real time by a facilitator on virtual "sticky notes" (blank in this example). Sticky notes were added to the Map as needed. After each story, the person whose story was being told had the opportunity to clarify or give further information. Arrows were used to indicate the flow of the story, including additional and tangential information. A second facilitator took notes to be added later in cases of pacing that were too fast for the Miro board recorder. Participants were encouraged only to tell stories that they were comfortable sharing; they could decide not to share or to stop the story flow at any time.

APPENDIX E

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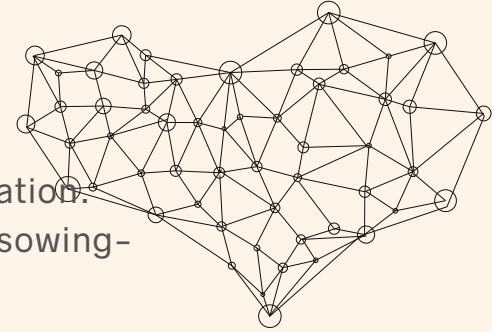
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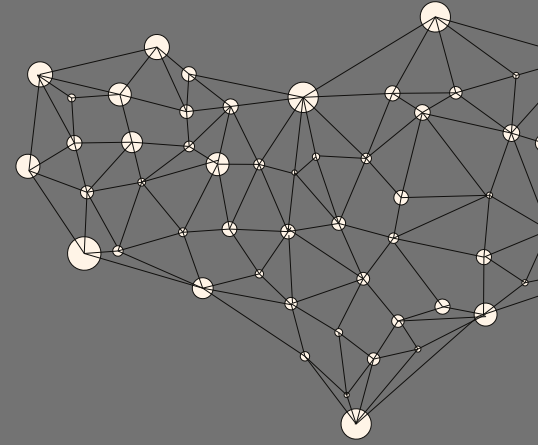
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APPENDIX F

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