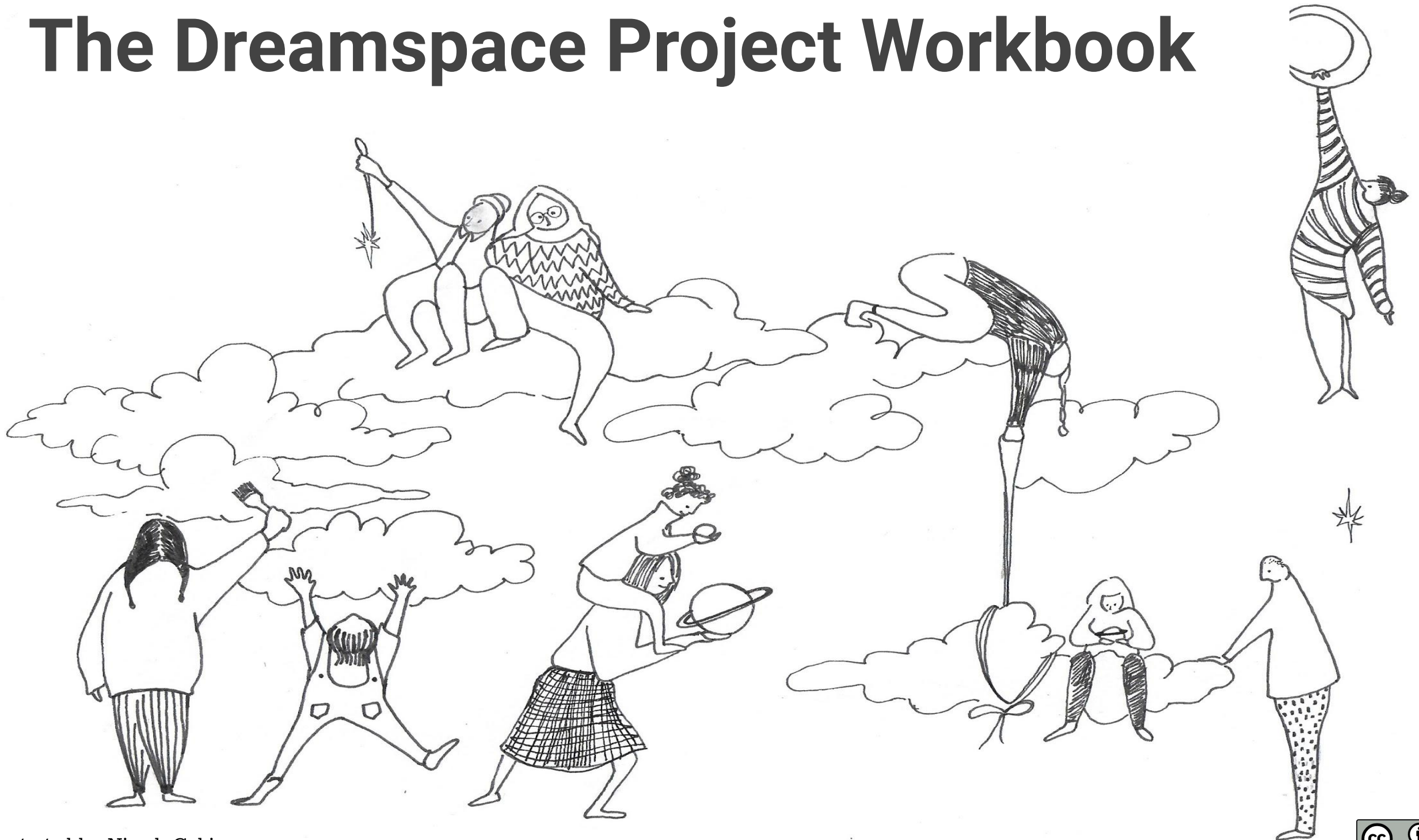







The Dreamspace Project Workbook



THIS WORKBOOK IS ALWAYS
UNDERGOING ~~WORK~~ HEAVY
RENOVATIONS. THANKS FOR
YOUR INTEREST AND PATIENCE.
PLEASE STAY TUNED!



Contents

	1	2	3	4
Introduction	The Dreamspace Framework and Context	Understanding <i>Your Self</i>	Rethink the Public Garden as an Institution	Where Dreams Meet Design
				



Introduction

what is the dreamspace?

The process of critical self-examination in The Dreamspace Project was inspired by the essay, “To search for the good and make it matter” by Estella Conwill Májozo. I found this particular section most captivating:

“The dream space of the soul is the real terrain that we should map. If not, then nothing else that we are fighting for or against has any possibility of transformation ... None of these concerns can be taken on unless they are examined, acknowledged, and confronted within the inner territory of the self, the earth that, in fact, we are. The soul is the seedbed of our actions. Everything that we conceptualize, create, or destroy has its beginnings there” (1995, p.88).

I return to this text again and again to reflect on her description of what seems like a forgotten harmony and connectivity between ourselves, to one another, and with the earth. As I thought about this piece in relation to my work in museums, an important message emerged. I often find myself in conversations about community outreach, extending the museum to diverse audiences. The trajectory of speech and perspective is external.

With The Dreamspace Project, I take the approach that we can only truly extend ourselves as far as we have dared to examine and interrogate inward; to cast an eye not only upon the world and others, but to spend time critically studying ourselves and the many layers and identities we hold. I have come to realize that **the bulk of the “work” we must engage in is primarily self-work.**

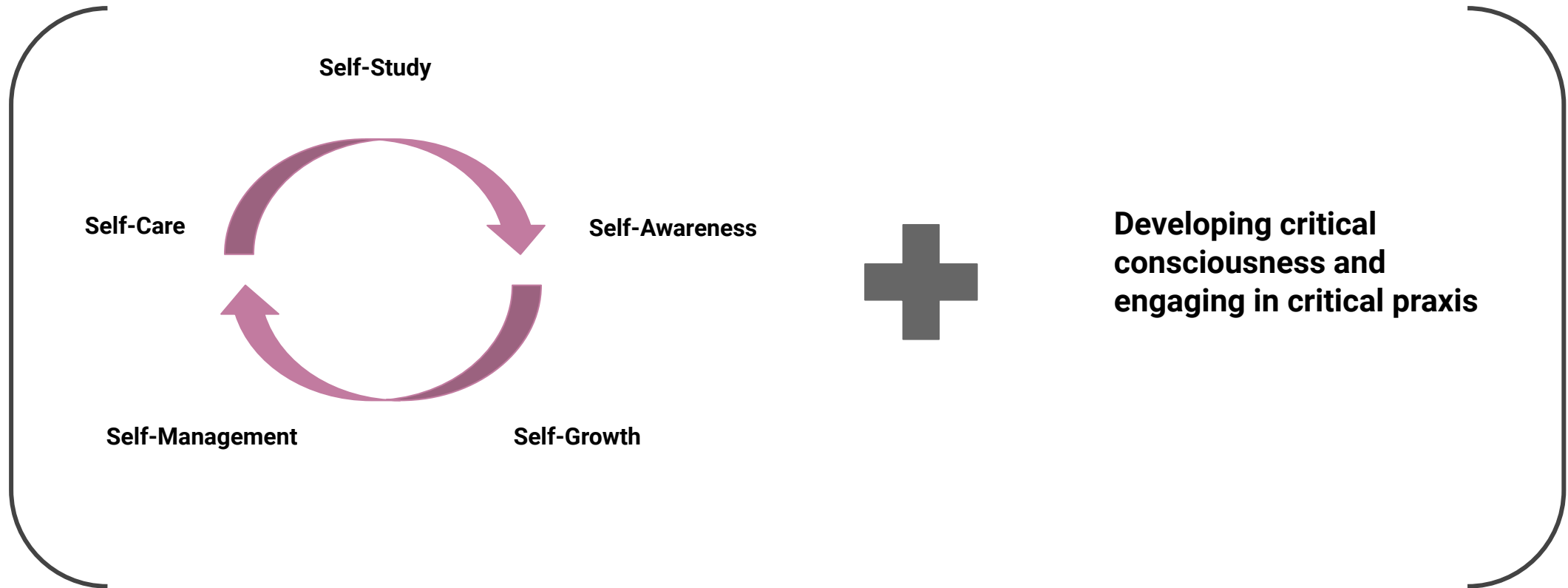
The work we do of **becoming** authentic, responsible, *culturally relevant* educators engages us in wide-reaching social forces and dynamics beyond our peripheral vision, teaching us how to become better human beings in the process. If we want to be better, the first step is acknowledging difficult truths so that we may begin to separate ourselves from persisting them.

Májozo also wrote of how we often envision sites of activism and social change as outside, in the world, and sometimes far away from our own lives. However, she argues that the transformation of society is inextricably linked to our transformation of ourselves. It is the many terrains within that we must examine and interrogate **before** we consider any impact on the world.

-Alyssa Machida

Note for Public Garden Employees: This version of the Dreamspace Project Workbook was edited for your use. Instead of referring to art museums, as in the original document, this refers to public gardens and their mission to make the natural world accessible to our communities. We are thankful to Alyssa Machida for sharing her work with us and generously allowing us to change this document to better meet our specific needs.

Self-Work



When individuals, groups, departments, and teams of people commit to doing the self-work, *that* builds capacity and creates opportunity for shifts and evolution in organizational culture, and *that* opens up possibilities for institutional change and transformation.

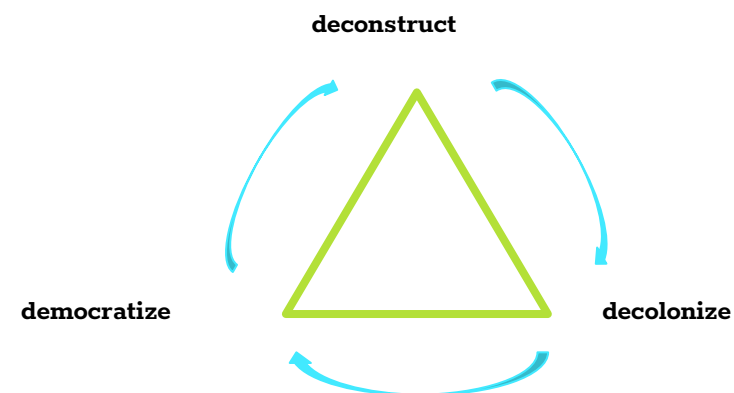
**Institutional change propelled
by commitments to iterative
processes of:**

**Deconstruction
Decolonization
Democratization**

Deconstruction examines the existing traditional, oppressive, normative, and dominant models in public gardens, and encourages building new frameworks and structures into institutions.

Decolonization explores the way our institutions are products of colonization, and opens up space for reconciliation, truth, healing, and justice in our work.

Democratization focuses on matters of inclusion and access to public space, and what it means for public gardens to authentically engage and co-create with their publics.



The rigor and authenticity of our collective institutional change stems from the depth and sincerity of the (self-)work we take on as individuals.

why dreams?

I think of the Dreamspace as the open-ended future of museums and public gardens. Dreams often have the connotation of being imaginary, and not grounded in reality. Someone recently told me that in their own life, they prefer to speak in terms of goals rather than aspirations to make things sound more concrete and attainable. I thought about this for the longest time - why am I so fixated on dreams? Why the dreamspace? Why not just a "design guide" or "envisioning" exercises? Why not just call it radical imaginings?

But after a lot of percolating, I think it's precisely because dreams are based somewhat on our own reality, but present an ***alternate constructed reality*** that captures the essence of this project.

Whether it's a daydream, or a magical dream, or a nightmare, dreams during the day or night have elements of:

our hopes and fears
memories
imagination
worldbuilding
and possibly most importantly, **the dreamer is in the dream.**

Why does this matter? Our cities and societies are all constructed by design - so are the stories of humanity that surround us. They begin as dreams and designs and become solidified over time through the actions of people into systems and structures. The dreams and designs foundational to our current reality didn't include everyone. They privilege, uplift, and protect certain people to the exclusion and oppression of others.

The future of museums and public gardens has to be the combined product of our individual and collective dreams. Not just the dreams and visions of some, those in power, those in wealth. All. And not just "including" folks in the general vision but still undermined, oppressed, or marginalized. I believe that the dreamspace is a future where people center themselves and each other to create just and equitable public spaces for the community to gather, learn, and celebrate.

who is this workbook for?

This workbook is intended for cultural and nonprofit workers, but its contents are also relevant to any person seeking to dismantle oppressive systems and reimagine public spaces.

how should I use the workbook?

The Dreamspace Workbook is meant to support the learning, growth, and transformation of individuals as well as public gardens and museums. A combination of personal self-reflection and group discussion is encouraged!

1. Take some time and space to engage in private, self-paced, critically interrogative and reflective self-work.
2. Reach out to friends, coworkers, and colleagues to participate in group discussions and dialogue. Use techniques such as the dyad to reflect on these different activities.
3. If you are in a position of power in your organization, use these resources to start conversations and envision a new way of constructing our public spaces.
4. Respond and document your learning in whatever ways work best for you, but make sure to keep a record of your journey so you can chart, track, and refer back.
5. Feel free to use the contents of this workbook in any way that work best for you. Seriously! The main purpose of this resource is to support **you** and all your desired evolutions and transformations.

a note on format

This workbook will always be in-process, and will keep growing and refining as I continue to grow as a learner and person. If you have questions or suggestions, please feel free to leave direct comments in the slide deck, or email me at: dreamspaceworkbook@gmail.com

I look forward to hearing from you!

Thank you very much for your interest and support.

-Alyssa Machida

“Growing a forest takes time.

At first, you do all this work and nothing happens.

But the most important thing you can do is try to plant as many forests wherever you can.”

(V. Iyer, personal communication, September 17, 2016).

This workbook is written with the hope that people generations from now will stand where we are today and see a vast forest. This is all part of a larger, iterative process; we are not looking for any particular “right” answers.

We want you to engage openly and honestly starting from where you are at. Take the time for critical study of our world, our systems and institutions, and ourselves.

As public garden employees, we always cast our gaze both forward and into the past, outward to people around us as well as unto ourselves. We want to cultivate a practice of critical reflection that is not merely one-time, retrospective, or sporadic but a constant humming, breathing organism within the dreamspace of the self.

1. Feel free to share this workbook with friends, family, and colleagues! You can read and actively engage on your own, or you can start group meetings and gatherings at work to discuss further.
2. Take notes and doodles, whatever makes sense to you! Be sure to document your process and practice of self-study so you can always return to reflect on growth over time.

1



**The
Dreamspace
Framework
and Context**

introduction //

We begin our collective journey of *The Dreamspace Project Workbook* with an excerpt from Judith Baca's "Whose Monument Where? Public Art in a Many-Cultured Society" (1996). She describes the origins of her mural the *Great Wall of Los Angeles*:

"One of the most catastrophic consequences of an endless real estate boom was the concreting of the entire Los Angeles River, on which the city was founded. The river, as the earth's arteries—thus atrophied and hardened—created a giant scar across the land which served to further divide an already divided city. It is this metaphor that inspired my own half-mile-long mural on the history of ethnic peoples painted in the Los Angeles river conduit. Just as young Chicanos tattoo battle scars on their bodies, the Great Wall of Los Angeles is a tattoo on a scar where the river once ran. In it reappear the disappeared stories of ethnic populations that make up the labor force which built our city, state, and nation" (1996, p. 133).

The story she weaves is enchanting, threading together multiple terrains of geography and history embodied in human movement, memory, and creative expression. Baca's narrative captures the way we trace and carve lines into the earth to create divisions, to remember who won, who belongs, and who is kept out. At times, we build to create bridges and break

down barriers. There is a vivid sense of a physical lineage between land and earth, our bodies, and our histories. Our construction of these terrains reflect our worldviews, and the institutions and systems we put in place to develop and maintain our sense of place.

You may wonder why we begin here, tending to this concept of landscapes. The first chapter of *The Dreamspace Project Workbook*, "Contextualizing: Mapping and Navigating Terrains," introduces the practice of developing critical self-awareness, building knowledge of the many ecologies we inhabit, and expanding understandings of our roles and responsibilities. To support public garden staff in their journey towards critical consciousness, this workbook will focus on mapping and navigating **the terrains of the Dreamspace: global, institutional, and self.**

Contextualizing ourselves in the terrains of the Dreamspace is all about relevance and interconnectivity. We dive and dig into **how** racism is relevant to our work and practices as public garden employees, **pushing beyond justifying why.** We unearth the many and complex ways that our life and work not only intersect with, but are controlled and manipulated by, global systems of oppression. The content of this workbook **pushes beyond symbolically advocating** for social justice; it emphasizes the necessity of actualized critical action.

introduction //

The Dreamspace Project Workbook begins from the **inarguable** premise that to live in the United States in the modern day is to be complicit within a network of global systems of oppression including, but not limited to:

- racism/White Supremacy
- western-centrism
- sexism/patriarchy
- heteronormativity
- cisgenderism
- ableism
- capitalism/plutonomy
- war
- colonialism
- classism/privilege

All of these are interwoven and built into the foundation of our society, not only historically, but persistently fabricated and upheld by our own (in)actions and (in)decisions. The American public garden is implicated in this. Regardless of our well-meaning intentions to present our gardens as spaces for public learning and enjoyment, our society and institutions are founded upon these flaws. Therefore, our roles and responsibilities as critical practitioners goes beyond advocating for diversity or inclusion; what would be the purpose of trying to build in equity and diversity into a fundamentally oppressive institution?

If we consider ourselves responsible, we must delegitimize and dismantle oppressive systems of power and hierarchy in our institutions. **We must radically reimagine and reconstruct new models for inclusive, equitable, and socially-just American cultural institutions and society.**

In this chapter, we begin with the core concepts of race, racism, colorblind racism, Whiteness, and White Supremacy to introduce ideas, perspectives, and language that are **foundational** to our work. The work of critical praxis extends far beyond *acknowledging* racism as a pressing issue, and necessitates active rethinking and transformation of our institutions, disciplines, and practices.

Thus, critical reflection and analytic understanding of racism and White Supremacy are not the long-term goals of this workbook, they are our starting point and baseline for understanding.

Each core concept will be introduced with a quote, followed by some questions for reflection. The questions are modeled on our Framework for Openness, in order to cultivate critical reflection and study of our world, our institutions, and ourselves.

the dreamspace framework for openness

Create intentional spaces

It takes intentional planning and design to create inclusive spaces and environments. Safety, trust, openness, and vulnerability aren't a given in any situation! Let's consider the ways we actively make space for people to bring their full selves, to participate, and engage fully.

Encourage criticality

Learning about systems of oppression is an emotional and painful process. If you feel fear, anger, or frustration, you are on a path to learning something that is changing your core. Breathe, stay calm, and keep going.

Everyone is complicit

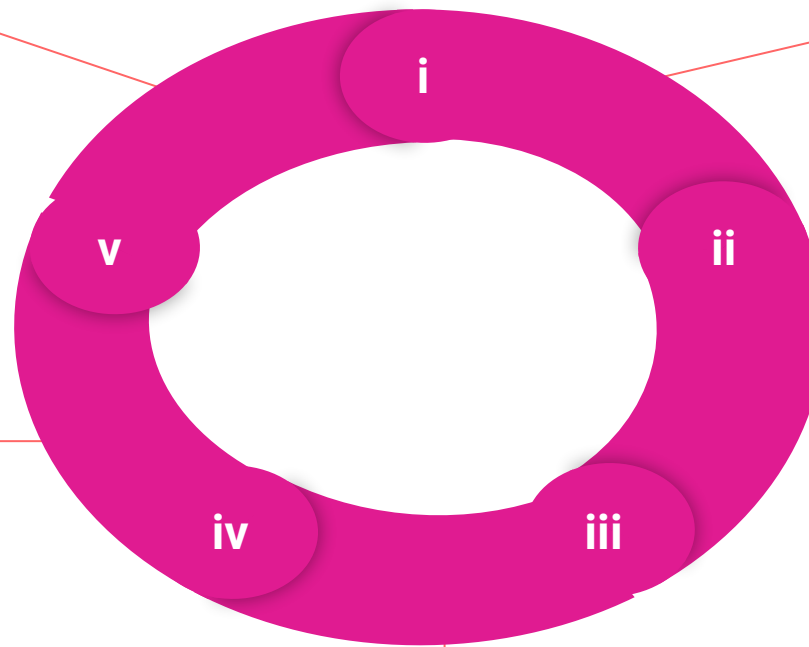
We are all complicit and participate in systems of oppression--no one is "in the clear," and it is everyone's responsibility to build awareness and engage in active practice! This is not about blame or fault, but rather making change.

Set aside ego

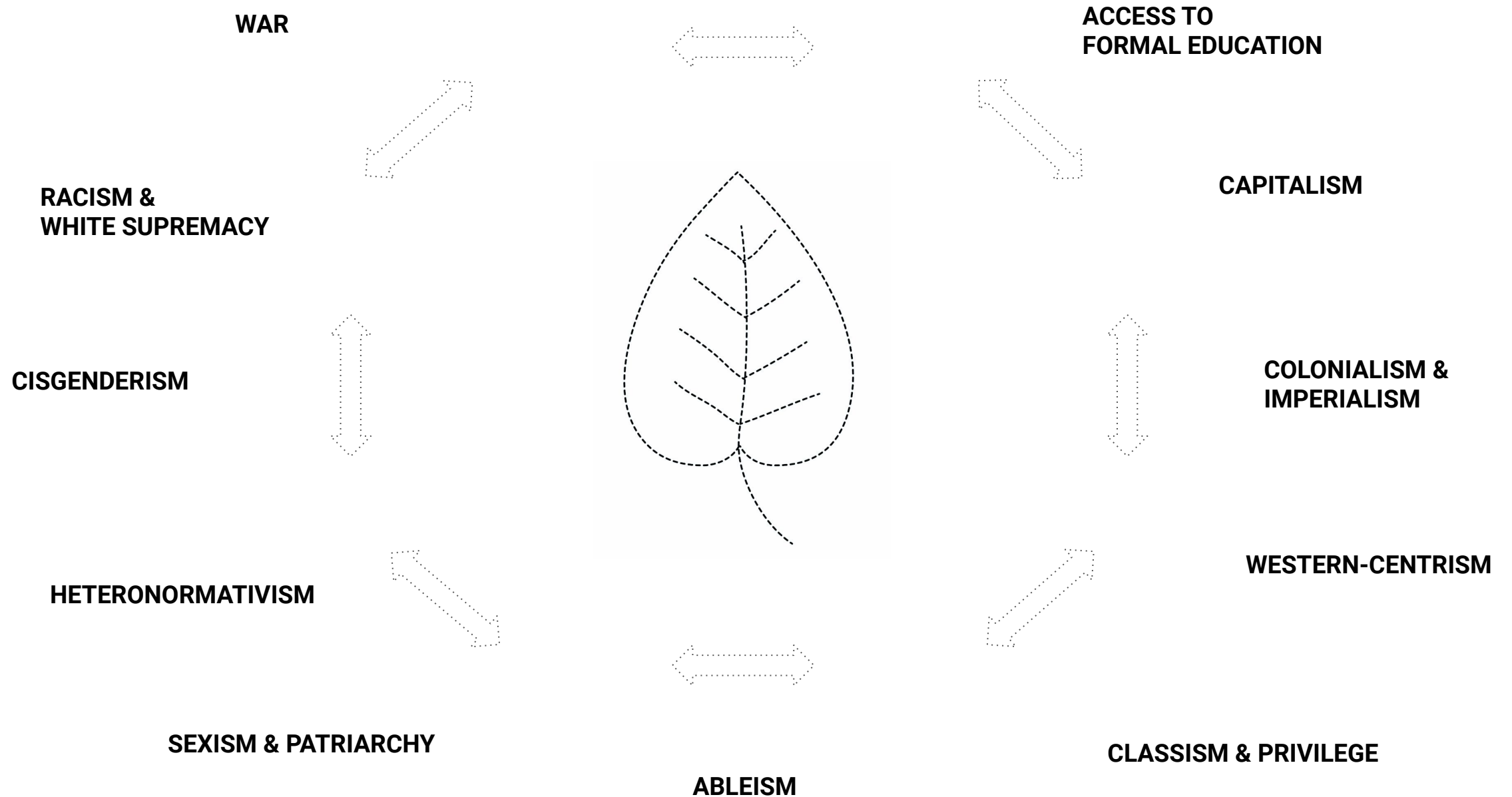
Be aware of the biases, assumptions, expectations, and prejudices that we bring into a space. When gathering for the purpose of dialogue and building understanding, we shouldn't impose our own agendas because this limits the individuality, experience, or engagement of others.

Listen for understanding

These may be difficult conversations to have. But the issues and challenges we face offer real opportunities for learning, teaching, and growth. When concerns come up, practice deep listening and offer support. Be on the lookout for moments of defensiveness and shutting-down - and be ready to call out or be called-out when that happens!



Mapping Public Gardens in relation to Systems of Power



Race //

“Fabrication implies the workings of human hands, and suggests the possible intention to deceive. More than the industrial term ‘formation,’ which carries connotations of neutral constructions and processes indifferent to individual intervention, referring to the fabrication of races emphasizes the human element and evokes the plastic and inconstant character of race” (Haney-López, 1995, p. 196).

What has been your personal experience with race?

What emotions are tied to your personal understandings of, and experiences with, race?

What assumptions and biases do you hold concerning race?

How have the natural world, public gardens, and colonial plant collections been used in the socio-cultural fabrication of race?

Where is race (in)visible in your institution?

Is your public garden having critical conversations about race? How can those conversations be started, fostered, or improved? What are the goals of the conversations?

Racism //

“I propose that we think of racism as a system of power with four domains” (Hill Collins, 2009, p. 53).

<p>A structural domain of power that shows ... how racism as a system of power is set up, and how it is organized without anybody doing anything.</p>	<p>A disciplinary domain of power where people use the rules and regulations of everyday life to uphold the racial hierarchy or to challenge it.</p>
<p>A cultural domain of power that manufactures the ideas that justify racial hierarchy... through the media in particular ... constructing representations, ideas, and stories about race and racism as a system of power.</p>	<p>An interpersonal domain of power that shapes race relations among individuals in everyday life ... where people accept and/or resist racial inequality in their everyday lives.</p>

What is your current understanding and working definition of racism?

What have been your personal experiences with racism?

What kinds of emotions, images, and memories does the term racism trigger for you?

Have you ever felt or exhibited resistance to acknowledging your complicity with racism? Why do you think racism is a difficult reality to accept?

Source: Hill Collins, P., & Simmons College. (2009). *Another kind of public education : Race, schools, the media, and democratic possibilities* (Simmons College/Beacon Press race, education, and democracy series book). Boston: Beacon Press.

Racism //

“I propose that we think of racism as a system of power with four domains” (Hill Collins, 2009, p. 53).

<p>A structural domain of power that shows ... how racism as a system of power is set up, and how it is organized without anybody doing anything.</p>	<p>A disciplinary domain of power where people use the rules and regulations of everyday life to uphold the racial hierarchy or to challenge it.</p>
<p>A cultural domain of power that manufactures the ideas that justify racial hierarchy... through the media in particular ... constructing representations, ideas, and stories about race and racism as a system of power.</p>	<p>An interpersonal domain of power that shapes race relations among individuals in everyday life ... where people accept and/or resist racial inequality in their everyday lives.</p>

Source: Hill Collins, P., & Simmons College. (2009). *Another kind of public education : Race, schools, the media, and democratic possibilities* (Simmons College/Beacon Press race, education, and democracy series book). Boston: Beacon Press.

Do your current understanding and experiences with racism align with any of these quadrants? How do these quadrants expand your understanding of racism?

How is racism related to power and systems of oppression? In considering racism as a system of power, who gets the power and who is oppressed?

How have the natural world, public gardens, and colonial plant collections been used to perpetuate racism?

Looking at these quadrants, in what ways are public gardens complicit with racism?

Colorblind racism //

“... an impregnable yet elastic ideological wall that barricades whites off from America’s racial reality—an impregnable wall because it provides them a safe, color-blind way to state racial views without appearing to be irrational or rabidly racist ... Today there is a sanitized, color-blind way of calling minorities niggers, spics, or chinks ... the language of liberalism ...” (Bonilla-Silva, 2014, p. 305).

Source: Bonilla-Silva, E. (2014). *Racism without racists : Color-blind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in America*(Fourth ed.).

Have you ever heard of the term colorblind racism? What is your current working definition of colorblind racism?

How does the supposedly “well-meaning” intent behind colorblind racism impede or create a barrier to addressing the persistent reality of racism?

What is the harm of ignoring or sanitizing racism?

How does the supposed neutrality of public gardens and plants mask the perpetuation of racism?

Whiteness //

“... as long as whiteness is felt to be the human condition, then it alone both defines normality and fully inhabits it ... the equation of being white with being human secures a position of power overwhelmingly because it is not seen as whiteness, but as normal.” (Dyer, 2002, p. 12).

Source: Dyer, R. (2002). The matter of whiteness. In Rothenberg, & Rothenberg, Paula S. (Ed.), *White privilege : Essential readings on the other side of racism* (pp. 9-14). New York: Worth.

What is your current understanding of Whiteness?

How does Whiteness relate to skin color? How does Whiteness go beyond skin color?

What is considered normal in the public garden world? What kinds of assumptions and biases are part of the construction of normalcy?

How are Whiteness and normalcy interconnected?

How do public gardens construct, perpetuate, and disseminate notions of Whiteness?

White Supremacy //

“In order for white racial hegemony to saturate everyday life, it has to be secured by a process of domination, or those acts, decisions, and policies that white subjects perpetrate on people of color ... white racial supremacy revolves less around the issue of unearned advantages, or the state of being dominant, and more around direct processes that secure domination and the privileges associated with it” (Leonardo, 2004, p. 137).

What are some of the ways in your life that other people hold, control, and exercise power against you? What are some of the ways that you hold, control, and exercise power against people?

What is power? Where does power come from?

What does it take to maintain power? What is the relationship between power and dominance?

What are the similarities and differences between racism and White Supremacy?

deconstructing whiteness starter kit

Important conversations are happening in museums and public gardens. Educators, nonprofit employees, artists, activists, and our own colleagues across the country and world are organizing and holding space for critical dialogue.

At the beginning of this chapter when I mentioned that a critical, analytic understanding of racism and White Supremacy were not end goals but **“our baseline for understanding,”** I wasn’t kidding! But I get that this is a lot all at once, and for some, this may be new terrain for you.

To support your future endeavours of dismantling the White Supremacist CisHeteroPatriarchy, I’ve compiled a list of some articles that approach the topics of whiteness and white supremacy from a variety of angles. This is not by any means a comprehensive list, but a starter kit of sorts.

I’ve tried, where I can, to embed direct links to the articles and PDFs. If a link was not included, please feel free to email me at dreamspaceworkbook@gmail.com. I have PDF files that I can share with you!

The matter of whiteness

By Richard Dyer

A phenomenology of whiteness

By Sara Ahmed

The color of supremacy

By Zeus Leonardo

Racism without racists

By Eduardo Bonilla-Silva

Legitimation of whiteness through silence in schools

By Angelina E. Castagno

White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack

Peggy McIntosh

The possessive investment in whiteness

By George Lipsitz

Reflections on the History of White Supremacy in the United States

By Rev. Dr. William J. Gardiner

deconstructing whiteness starter kit

White Fragility
By Robin DiAngelo

What white children need to know about race
By Ali Michael and Eleonora Bartoli

So You Want to Fight White Supremacy
By Ijeoma Oluo

The heart of whiteness: Ijeoma Oluo Interviews Rachel Dolezal, the White Woman Who Identifies as Black
By Ijeoma Oluo

The Anger of the White Male Lie
By Ijeoma Oluo

What I told my white friend when he asked for my black opinion on white privilege
By Lori Lakin Hutcherson

White supremacy culture
From Dismantling Racism: A Workbook for Social Change Groups
By Kenneth Jones and Tema Okun

White People: I Don't Want You to Understand Me Better, I Want You to Understand Yourself
By Ijeoma Oluo

I will never underestimate white people's need to preserve whiteness again
By Damon Young

White feminists, we can still see your cis white supremacy under your pink pussy hats
By Ally Sabatina

Now is the time to talk about what we are actually talking about
By Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Mourning for Whiteness
By Toni Morrison

Dear White America
By George Yancy

Seeing White Podcast
From Scene On Radio

institutional //

“Museums have been complicit in the construction of physical and cultural hierarchies that underpinned racist thought from the Enlightenment until well into the twentieth century, in marked contrast to the inclusionary role that many now seek to fulfill... There is nothing ‘post’ about colonialism as a view of the world that persists” (Lynch & Alberti, 2010, pp. 13-14).

The Dreamspace Workbook is written to examine, interrogate, and act against the oppressive, racist, hierarchical foundations of American cultural institutions, including museums and public gardens. We will critically examine our cultural institutions, problematize our status quo of normalcy, and look for ways we can ignite institutional change.

It is not enough to acknowledge the dark legacies of our institutional histories and disciplines. We must always remember that these violent and problematic pasts have ignited colonizing, dehumanizing processes that serve as the foundation of our **current** practices. It requires more than noticing, or trying to avoid, things that seem *overtly* or *blatantly* racist. We have to understand that racism is foundational and fundamental to our institutions, practices, and lives; they are not restricted to the few or extreme exceptions. **We need to be more perceptive to the infinite and intersecting ways that global systems of oppression infiltrate and determine our actions and decisions.** This influences everything from who gets to enter and participate in these spaces, who makes decisions, how we conceive and engage with visitors and the public, how we think about learning and education, and where we place our values - in plants, or our fellow human beings.

We begin this process of reflecting on the construction and control of the public garden space in the “let’s take a walk” series analyzing specific aspects of place, space, people, voice, and engagement within our institutions.

institutional //

“Learning is and can be a value if we are aware that learning - which is pursued by each individual in times and ways that cannot be programmed - is a ‘relational place’ that makes us reflect on the meaning of education itself and search for new paths in educating and personal and professional development” (Rinaldi, 2001, p. 141).

Working in the fields of public gardens, horticulture, education, and botany, we have so much theory, data, and research available for us to study and glean from. While investigating existing information is a vital way to pursue further learning, I want to underline Rinaldi’s call for us to act as active agents conducting research, documentation, and reflection. She advocates actively engaging in self-study, learning, and discovery, not passively consuming information to *program* ourselves.

Alongside this notion of active research and critical reflection, I want to encourage us to constantly check our self-awareness on external and personal biases, assumptions, and expectations. Problematize any and all notions of normalcy and status quo; just because “that’s the way things are” or “that’s the way things are done,” does not necessarily mean that they are socially-just or equitable practices. When working on exercises throughout the workbook, remember that norms, protocols, and behaviors that might seem natural for some in the public garden space are not obvious and relevant to, or inclusive of, all peoples.

In the “let’s take a walk” mapping exercises:

1. **Document**: Take notes, doodle, or snap some photographs to capture and log concrete visual evidence
2. **Be specific**: Back up your ideas with visual and physical examples
3. **Look twice**: Take this as an opportunity to explore your organization with new eyes, and with this new lens of critical consciousness in development
4. **Question everything**: Ask yourself and colleagues, “Why is this like this? Who is this for? What is the purpose? Can this be better?”
5. **Talk and Engage**: Discuss these issues with your teams, peers, and communities
6. **Over Time**: Make these exercises a long-term practice or habit, not just a one-off!

let's take a walk | place

*“Place incarnates the experiences and aspirations of a people. Place is not only a fact to be explained in the broader frame of space, but it is also a reality to be clarified and understood from the perspectives of the people who have given it meaning”
(Tuan, 1979, p. 387).*

Draw a map of the area surrounding your public garden. You can make this as broad or specific as you wish. Maybe start off with the neighborhoods, sites, and communities within a 3-mile radius, and expand from there.

1. Reflect on your public garden's location within a historical and national context.
2. Acknowledge the Indigenous peoples whose land is now occupied. Who lived where the garden now stands?
3. Where do you live in relation to the public garden? How do you get to work? What is the path you take?
4. What are five words you would use to describe the city/neighborhood surrounding your public garden?
5. What are the areas of the city that you are most familiar with? What is attractive to you about these places?
6. Are there any areas of the city that you have not yet been to, or avoid? Why?
7. What are five main strengths that your city and neighborhood has to offer?
8. What are five key challenges that your city and neighborhood is facing?
9. What are the relationships between your garden and its local/regional communities?

let's take a walk | space

*“... that this architectural apparatus should be a machine for creating and sustaining a power relation independent of the person who exercises it...”
(Foucault, 1979, p. 201).*

Examine the physical space of your public garden. Take the perspective of a visitor and imagine what they may see or experience.

1. What are five words you would use to describe your public garden?
2. Spend some time analyzing these words. What kinds of meanings and associations do they suggest?
3. What kinds of emotions does the space provoke?
4. Are there other natural spaces in your city that look like your garden? What kinds of spaces have similar architecture or plantings?
5. What kinds of people, businesses, activities, organizations do these spaces contain?
6. What types of experiences does your public garden space allow for?
7. How is the garden organized?
8. Take a moment to analyze the style of organization and wayfinding in your garden: who came up with this framework; would it make sense to a first-time visitor; whose perspective does it represent?
9. How is the space controlled and monitored?
10. Are there clear norms that you expect visitors to follow? How are these made clear to new visitors?
11. Is your garden a public place?

let's take a walk | people

“Audiences are never ‘others’—they are always very concrete selves. In other words, it is impossible to plan a participatory experience and take steps to make it public without also making some assumptions about those who will eventually partake in it” (Helguera, 2011, p. 23).

Whose identities are represented in your public garden? Consider factors including - but not limited to - race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexuality, ability, socio-economic, religious, and educational background.

1. Who are the people who work in your public garden? Is there equal representation of people of diverse identities and backgrounds?
2. What plants are represented in your collection? Who chose the plants and where are they from?
3. Whose stories are being told? From whose perspective are these narratives constructed? Look for specific examples.
4. What does your visitorship look like? Is your garden consistently attracting and engaging with people of diverse identities and backgrounds? Look for concrete evidence.
5. When you think of your garden’s “audience” and “community” who comes to mind?
6. Who is included in your stated intended audience? Who is excluded?
7. Is your intended audience reflected in your actual visitorship?

let's take a walk | voice

*“Censorship is saying: ‘I’m the one who says the last sentence. Whatever you say, the conclusion is mine’
(Weiwei, April 2012).*

Walk through your public garden focusing specifically on the lens of *voice*.

1. What does “voice” mean to you? What does it mean to be able to have or exercise voice?
2. What kind of voice does your public garden present? Is it welcoming, friendly, helpful?
3. Whose voice is in the garden?
4. To whom *specifically* is the public garden directing its voice and message?
5. How many languages does your garden speak/write?
6. Is the voice of your garden inclusive to diverse visitors and audiences? How does it make visitors feel welcome or out of place?
7. What is the public garden *saying* throughout its buildings and outdoor spaces?
8. Does your garden ask enough questions? Are these questions sincere and open to critique? Do they invite *genuine* inquiry and dialogue from the public?
9. Is there a balance between institutional voice and visitor voice in your garden? Are there any places where visitor voices are *permanently* represented in the space?
10. Are there ways that visitors are encouraged to ask questions?

let's take a walk | engagement

*“Forging a learning community that values wholeness over division, disassociation, splitting, the democratic educator works to create closeness. Palmer calls it the ‘intimacy that does not annihilate difference’”
(hooks, 2003, p. 49).*

Observe what people are doing in your public garden. Consider not only *their* actions and behaviors, but whether the garden is supporting visitors with opportunities for engagement.

1. What forms of engagement would you like to see in the garden?
2. What does quality engagement look and feel like for you? What are some behaviors associated with this?
3. What are your standards for quality engagement? Where did this criteria come from?
4. What are the things you value in your visitors' experiences?
5. Describe the forms of engagement you actually see in the space.
6. What kinds of interpretation and guided experiences does your garden provide?
7. Do these opportunities for engagement guide/direct visitors toward certain outcomes, or allow for creative agency?
8. Does your public garden encourage both individual and social experiences with art?

references

Baca, Judith F. (1996). Whose monument where? public art in a many cultured society. In S. Lacy (Ed.), *Mapping the terrain: New genre public art* (p. 131-138). Seattle, Wash.: Bay Press.

Baldwin, J. (1998). A Talk to teachers. In *Collected essays* (Library of America 98) (p. 678-686). New York: Library of America.

Bonilla-Silva, E. (2014). *Racism without racists : Color-blind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in America*(Fourth ed.).

Davis, A., & Barat, Frank. (2016). Ferguson reminds us of the importance of a global context In *Freedom is a constant struggle : Ferguson, Palestine, and the foundations of a movement* (p. 13-30). Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books.

Dyer, R. (2002). The matter of whiteness. In Rothenberg, & Rothenberg, Paula S. (Ed.), *White privilege : Essential readings on the other side of racism* (pp. 9-14). New York: Worth.

Foucault, M. (1979). *Discipline and punish : The birth of the prison* (Social theory). New York: Vintage Books.

Freire, P. (2014). Chapter 2 In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed (30th Anniversary Edition)* (p. 71-86). London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Haney-López, I. (1995). The social construction of race. In Delgado, & Delgado, Richard. (Ed.), *Critical race theory : The cutting edge* (pp. 191-203). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Helguera, P. (2011). *Education for socially engaged art: a materials and techniques handbook*.

Hill Collins, P., & Simmons College. (2009). *Another kind of public education : Race, schools, the media, and democratic possibilities* (Simmons College/Beacon Press race, education, and democracy series book). Boston: Beacon Press.

hooks, b. (2003). Democratic Education. In *Teaching community : A pedagogy of hope*. (pp. 41 - 49). New York: Routledge.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2006). “Yes, but how do we do it?” practicing culturally relevant pedagogy. In Landsman, Landsman, Julie, & Lewis, Chance W. (Eds.), *White teachers, diverse classrooms : A guide to building inclusive schools, promoting high expectations, and eliminating racism* (p. 29-42). Sterling, Va: Stylus Pub.

Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate, W. (1995). Toward a Critical Race Theory of Education. *Teachers College Record*, 97(1), 47.

Leonardo, Z. (2004). The Color of Supremacy: Beyond the discourse of ‘white privilege’. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 36(2), 137-152.

Lorde, A. (2007). Learning from the 60s. In *Sister outsider : Essays and speeches* (p. 134-144). Berkeley, Calif.: Crossing Press.

Lynch, B., & Alberti, S. (2010). Legacies of prejudice: Racism, co-production and radical trust in the museum. *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 25(1), 13-35.

Rinaldi, C. (2005). *In dialogue with Reggio Emilia : Listening, researching, and learning* (Contesting early childhood). London ; New York: Routledge.

Takaki, R. (2008). *A different mirror : A history of multicultural America* (1st rev. ed., Back Bay nonfiction). New York: Back Bay Books/Little, Brown, and.

Tuan, Y. (1979). Space and place: humanistic perspective. In Gale, S., & Olsson, G. (Ed.), *Philosophy in geography* (Theory and decision library ; v. 20). Dordrecht ; Boston: D. Reidel Pub.

Weiwei, A. (2012, April 15). China’s censorship can never defeat the internet. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/libertycentral/2012/apr/16/china-censorship-internet-free-dom>

2



**Understanding
Your Self**

self //

At the core of the Dreamspace approach is the acknowledgment that we can only truly extend ourselves in this work as far as we have dared to examine and interrogate inward; to cast an eye not only upon the world and others, but to spend time critically studying ourselves and the many layers and identities we hold. Quite often in public gardens we are in conversations about what we need to do for visitors and communities, extending the public garden to diverse audiences. The trajectory of speech and perspective is external when in fact the bulk of the “work” we must engage in is primarily self-work.

Part of the challenge of catalyzing and activating radical change and transformation in public gardens comes down to the day-to-day of navigating the tangled knot of interconnected systems of oppression - as well as the many people that continue to uphold them, including ourselves! The next few pages feature a variety of tools and exercises that will hopefully provide some time, space, and inspiration for you to cultivate a practice of critical self-reflection, self-awareness, self-care, and self-love.

Self-Study

Critical self-reflection, learning, unpacking emotions

Self-Care

Understand that this is an iterative process and that you will not be perfect. Take time for yourself and forgive your mistakes. You will make them.

Self-Awareness

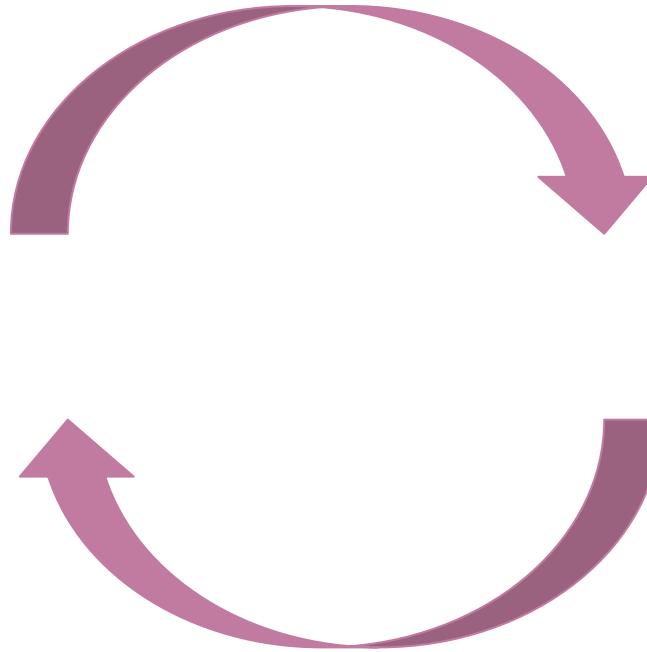
Clarity about one's own biases and assumptions

Self-Management

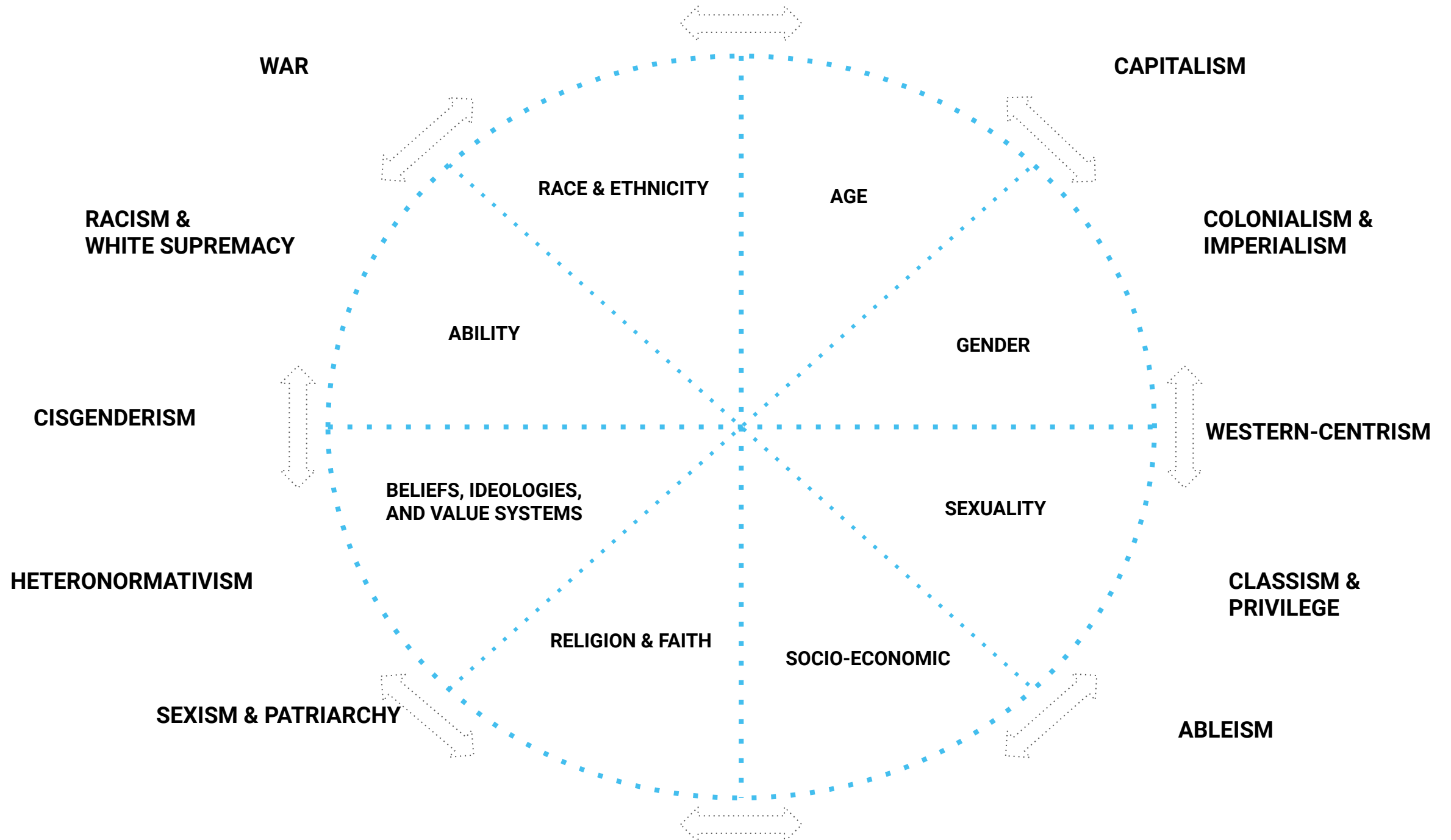
Use what was learned through reflection to make changes to behaviors and automatic reactions

Self-Growth

Decide what you want to change and consider how to make these changes



Mapping personal identity in relation to global systems of oppression



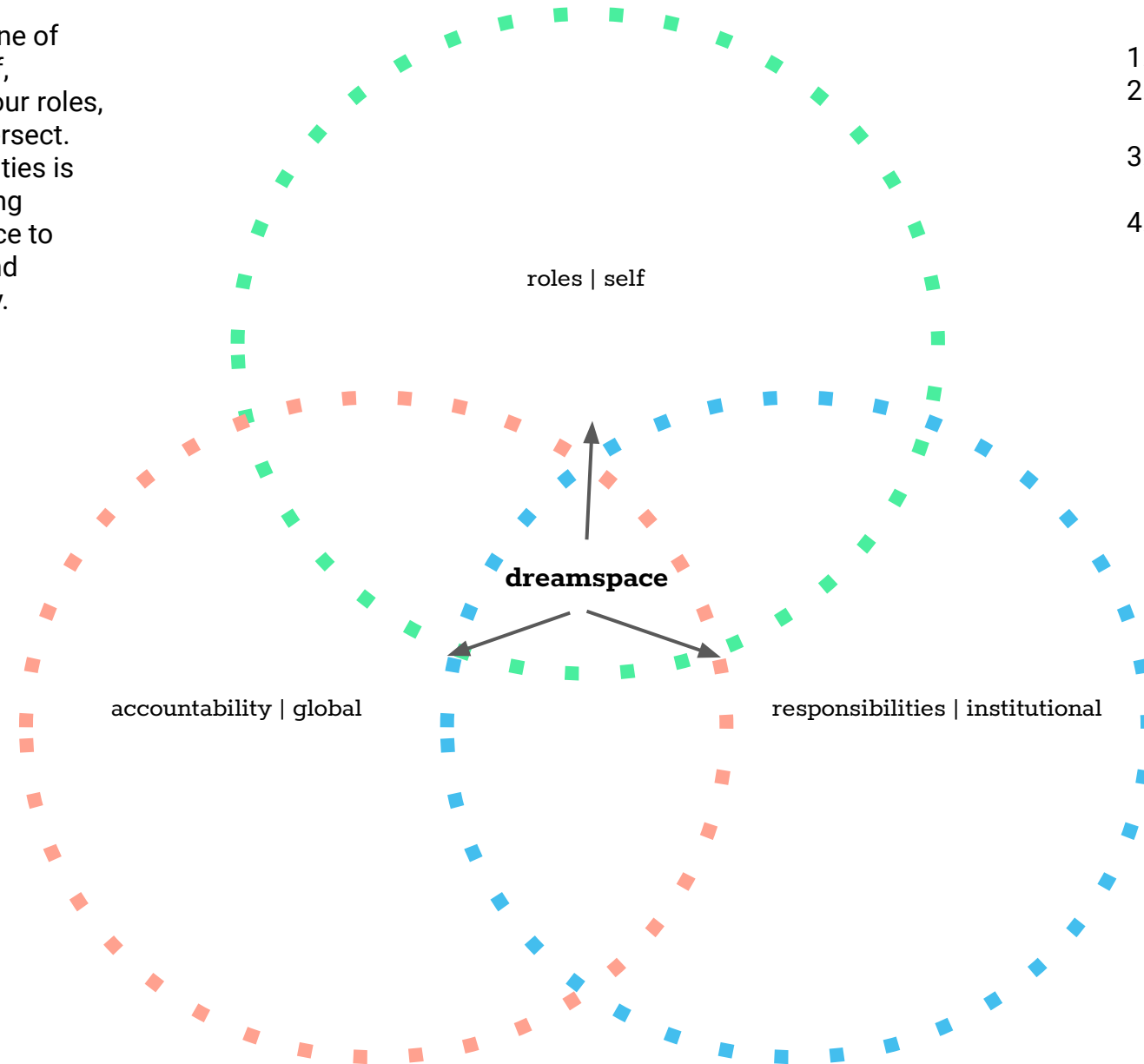
public garden road map

Draw a road map of your public garden experience. Where are you coming from, where have you been, what you have seen, and what you have done? All of these insights and experiences inform your practice and perspectives.

1. When did you first realize your passion for plants? For gardens? For sharing these loves with others?
2. Where did this journey begin?
3. What are some of the memories you have tied to *why* you became interested in this path?
4. Where has this path taken you? Which cities? What experiences?
5. What have been some of the most significant sites and experiences in your journey?
6. Have you ever been lost? What was that experience like? What did you do to get yourself back on track?
7. Have you discovered unexpected roads and paths along the way?
8. How did you get to your current position and your current institution?
9. Where do you see yourself headed next?
10. Do you have a way of getting there? What will allow you to reach these goals?

roles, responsibilities, accountability

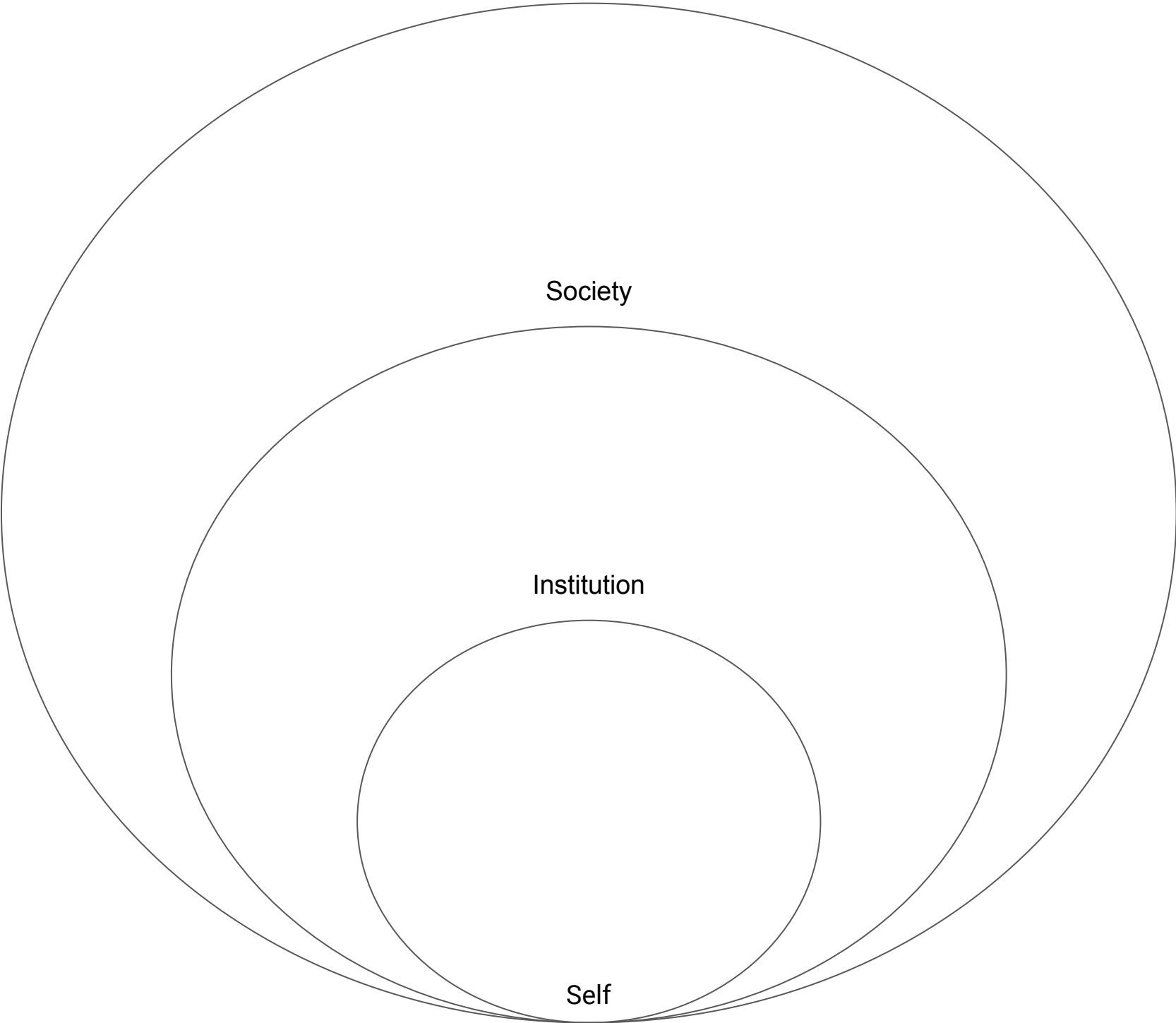
We envision the dreamspace as the zone of overlap between the three terrains (self, institutional, global), as well as where our roles, responsibilities, and accountability intersect. The alignment of roles and responsibilities is not a new concept, but this self-mapping exercise is meant to deepen our practice to encompass our interconnectedness and accountability to our global community.



1. How often do you consider yourself as part of a larger global community?
2. In what ways does this affect (or not affect) your daily decisions, actions, and life?
3. What are some of the difficulties in being a responsible, global citizen?
4. What are some ways that we can hold ourselves and one another more accountable to global social justice?

1. What is your role in your public garden?
2. How do you envision your role in the larger public garden landscape?
3. How do you see your role in society, or in your community?
4. In what ways do these roles overlap and intersect? In what ways are these roles separate from each other?

1. What are your responsibilities at your public garden?
2. How do you envision your responsibilities in the larger garden landscape?
3. How do you see your responsibilities in society or in your community?
4. In what ways do these responsibilities overlap and intersect? In what ways are these responsibilities separate from each other?
5. For each question above, consider to whom you are responsible.



“Finding your family in this work”

Mapping support networks

What does family mean to me? Who is part of my family?

What does community mean to me?

What are the ways I get support from my family and community? In what ways do I give back?


What is my personal definition of an ally or accomplice? Who takes on these roles in my life?

Who are my mentors?

Who are people I need/want to, or am interested in connecting with in future?

Reflect on the relationship between your cares and fears.

How do they shape our decisions, actions, and work as developing, critical public garden professionals?



What do you care about?



What are you afraid of?

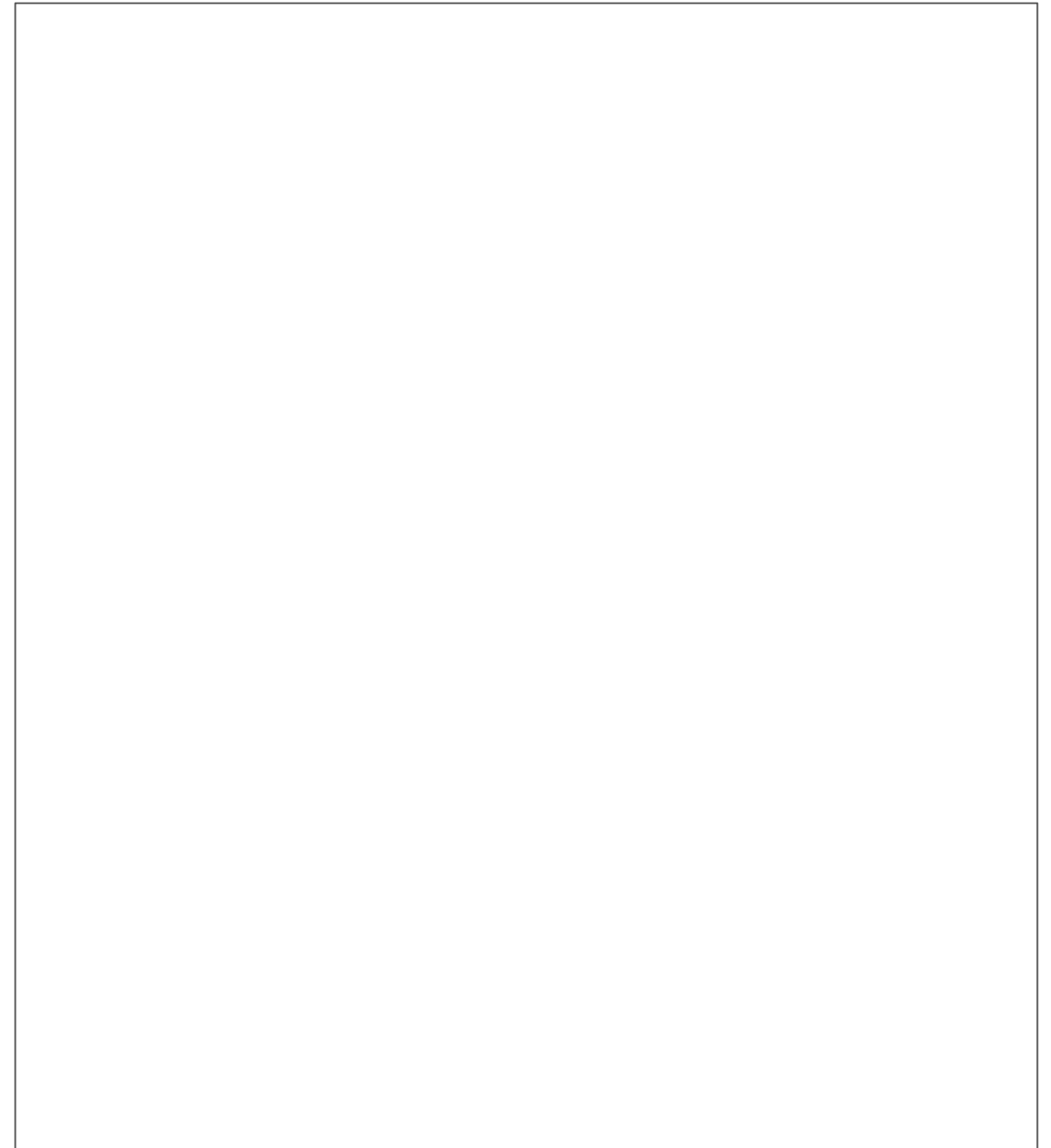
your story

Our own past and future are ever-present in our current self.
How often do you think of your own story in public gardens?

- How did you develop this passion?
- How did you come to this work?
- How has your story changed over time?
- How much does your upbringing factor into how you approach your role and practice in your field?

At this crucial moment in our individual practice and for our field, it is important to remember how we got to where we are in order to re-author our individual and collective paths forward.

Write or map out your story in public gardens. Include any memories, places, mentors, experiences, plants, and anything else that is, or has been, personally meaningful to you in this journey.



craft a personal mission statement

In public gardens we often have institutional mission statements and strategic plans, but how often do we get to craft our own statement?

- If you were to have a personal mission statement in your role at your garden, what would it say?
- Would your mission statement relate to the work of your entire department? Or just you?
- Do you think that your personal mission is in alignment with that of your institution?
- Where are there similarities and overlaps?
- Where are there some differences?

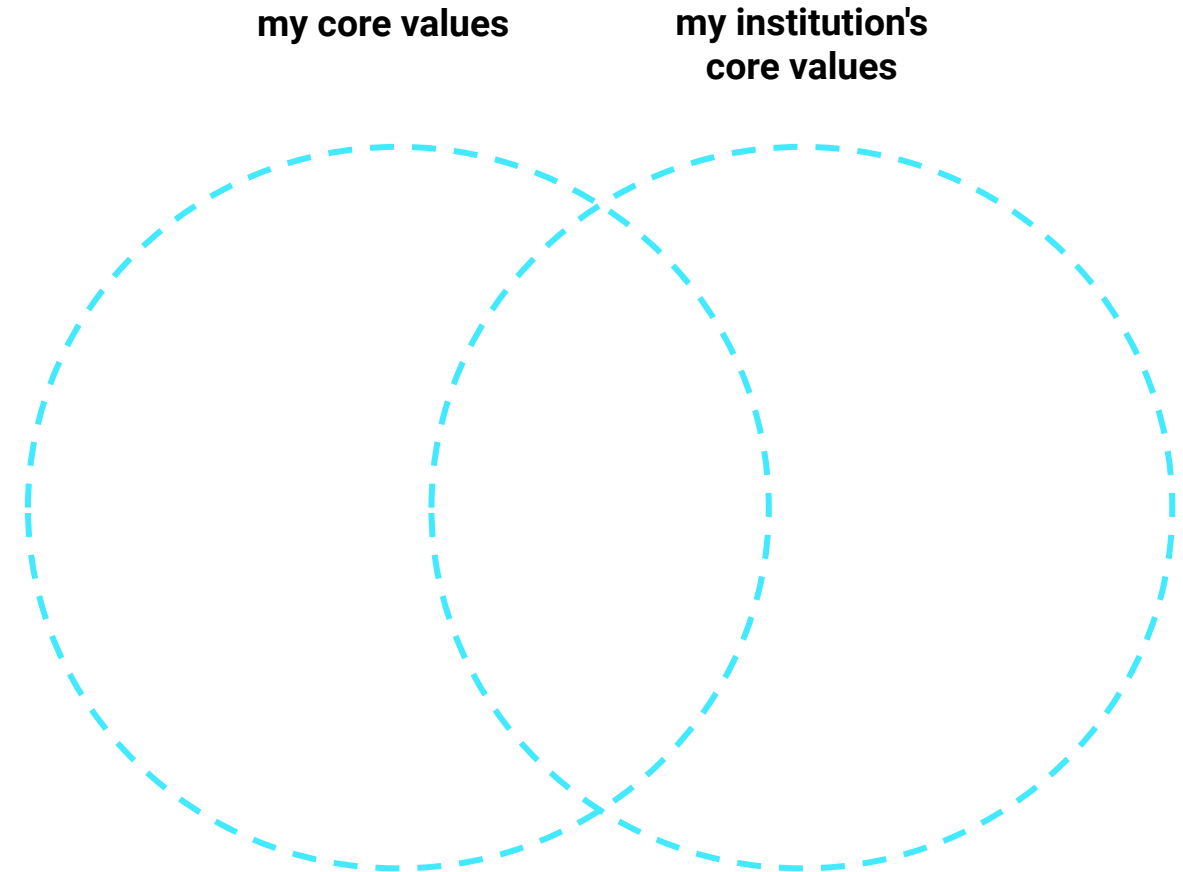
Try to craft one sentence or one paragraph to capture your personal mission statement.

personal core values

1. What are the core values or qualities that ground your practice as a public garden employee?
2. What does your institution value in terms of quality experiences for visitors and community members?
3. How do these align and differ from your own core values?

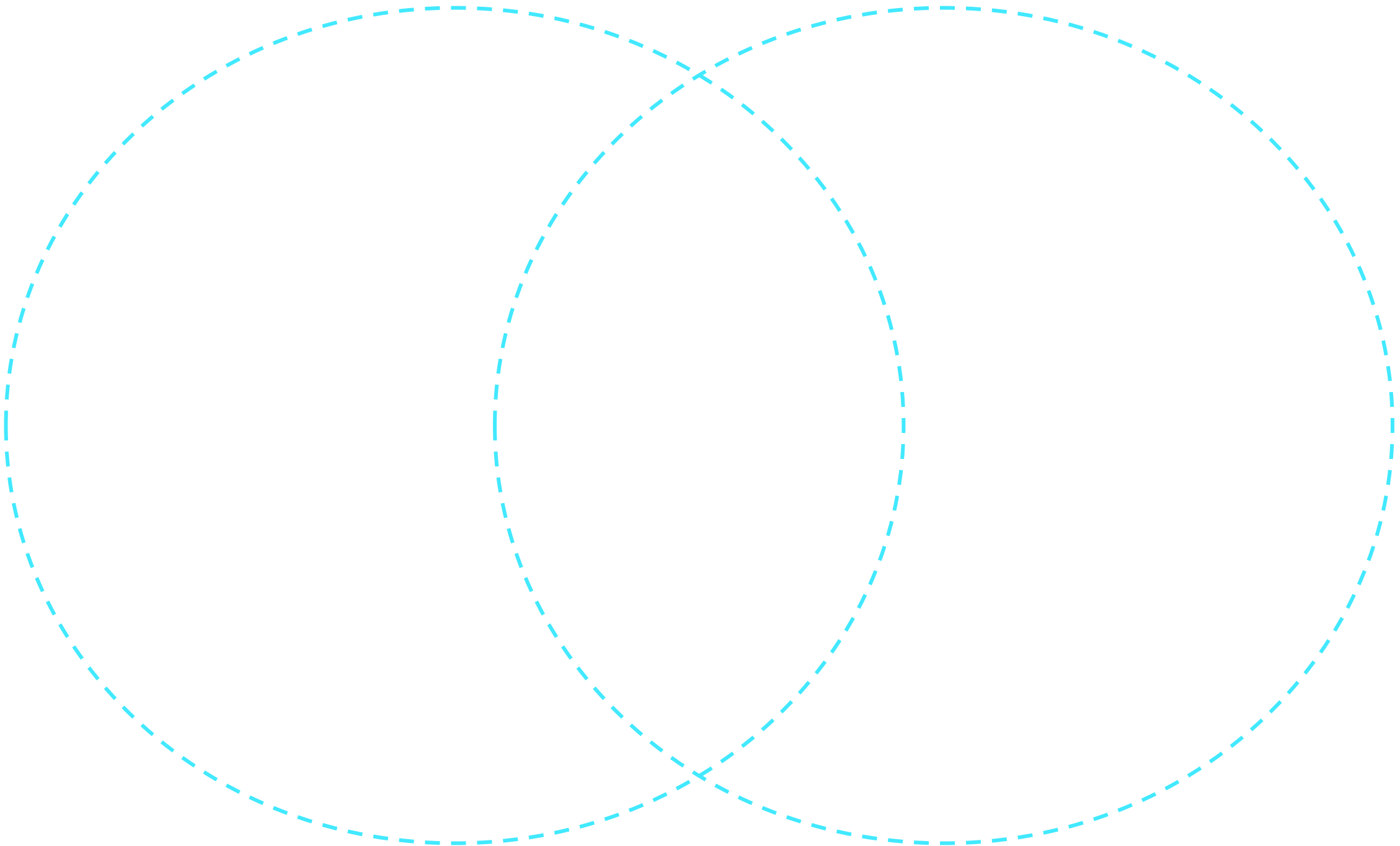
You can do this activity individually and share with a colleague! It may be an interesting exercise to map out and compare:

- Personal values
- Departmental values
- Institutional values
- Community values
- Social Justice values



my core values as a public garden employee

my institution's core values



3



**Rethink Public
Garden as an
Institution**

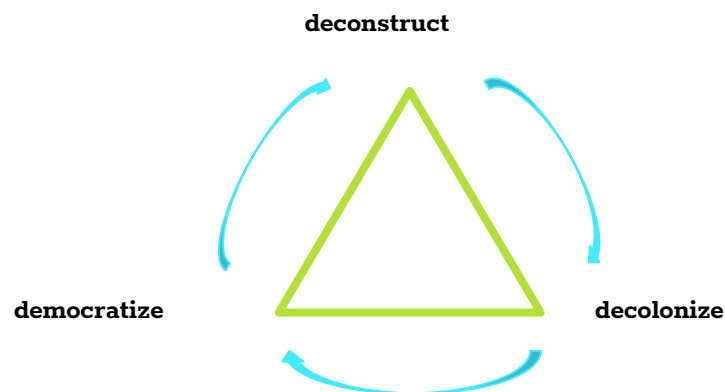
introduction //

"Deconstruction" is one of the concepts foundational to The Dreamspace Project. The Dreamspace framework focuses on an iterative process of deconstructing, decolonizing, and democratizing the **institution** of public gardens.

Deconstruction examines the existing traditional, oppressive, normative, and dominant models in public gardens, and encourages building new frameworks and structures into institutions.

Decolonization explores the way our institutions are products of colonization, and opens up space for reconciliation, truth, healing, and justice in our work.

Democratization focuses on matters of inclusion and access to public space, and what it means for public gardens to authentically engage and co-create with their publics.



This chapter was inspired by Gloria Ladson-Billings' article, "Yes, But How Do We Do It? Practicing Culturally Relevant Pedagogy," where she writes:

"teachers engaged in culturally relevant pedagogy must be able to deconstruct, construct, and reconstruct (Shujaa, 1994) the curriculum. Deconstruction refers to the ability to take apart the 'official knowledge' (Apple, 2000) to expose its weaknesses, myths, distortions, and omissions. Construction refers to the ability to build curriculum ... Reconstruction requires the work of rebuilding the curriculum that was previously taken apart and examined. It is never enough to tear down. Teachers must be prepared to build up and fill in the holes that emerge when students begin to use critical analysis as they attempt to make sense of the curriculum" (Ladson, Billings, 2006, p. 32).

It is crucial to emphasize that our deconstructive work is not a destructive force. It is an emergent and generative force that deepens our practice, and challenges us to build the transformation in our spaces that we seek.

introduction //

Each section of this chapter addresses this Deconstruction framework from a different lens.

In **core concepts**, each page will cover a foundational idea to ground and spark further thinking throughout the chapter. The core concepts are: knowledge and power, (not//un)learning, whiteness, cultural capital, intersectionality, and access.

In **public gardens as institutions**, we examine the ways the structures of the organization uphold systems of oppression and think through ways public garden leaders can begin building their own justice-oriented values and vision into their work.

Each section has reflection questions for you to use. We encourage you to use these in whichever way is most beneficial to you and your organization. If you are in a position

of power, this might be worth working through with your department or at a staff meeting. It can also be used with a group of peers at your institution. In addition, we could create an online conversation to continue this work with others in the room.

core concepts //

After determining *deconstruction* as the guiding and underlying framework for this chapter, I sat for a long time with the question, what needs to be deconstructed in cultural organizations? When thinking of building space and capacity for critical, inclusive, and anti-oppressive practices and pedagogies in public gardens, what is it that needs to be deconstructed?

It was clear from the outset that the *content* shared with the visitors to public gardens was not the only thing that was troubling and needed interrogation. Nor was education and interpretation the only relevant department. Oppressive modes of engagement and inequitable distributions of power are foundational to how our institutions have been constructed, and how they continue to operate.

This requires us to probe and scrutinize every purpose, value, and argument we uphold for the biases, judgments, and assumptions at the root of our public gardens. We need to better understand cultural organizations as a construct. Only once we understand the complexity and layeredness of our institutions can we begin navigating and activating authentic transformations and change.

To continue digging deeper, the core concepts for this chapter are:

knowledge and power
(not//un)learning
cultural capital
access

Each core concept will be introduced with a quote, followed by some questions for reflection. Take some time to review and respond on your own, and then gather some colleagues and thought-partners to discuss together. You might

knowledge and power //

“But knowledge is never neutral, it never exists in an empiricist, objective relationship to the real. Knowledge is power, and the circulation of knowledge is part of the social distribution of power. (p. 149).

Fiske, J. *Reading the Popular* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 149-50.

1. How do you personally define knowledge?
2. What kinds of knowledge do you possess and share at your public garden?
3. Where does this knowledge come from?
4. Does your public garden draw from diverse cultural sources of knowledge? How did you access this knowledge? Who gave you permission to use this knowledge?
5. What qualifies as valid knowledge at your garden?
6. Is any of the knowledge at your garden considered contested or controversial? How so? From whose perspective?
7. Do you display conflicting versions of “knowledge”? How?
8. Who at your garden is seen as "knowledgeable" or "expert"?
9. When you think of a potential "knowledgeable" visitor to your garden, what are the qualities and characteristics of that individual?
10. What kinds of expectations do we place on visitors to value and engage with our knowledge, and to share their own knowledge?
11. What are some ways that we empower and disempower through the construction, distribution, and validation of knowledge at our public garden?

(not//un)learning

"Learning how to not-learn is an intellectual and social challenge ... It consists of an active, often ingenious, willful rejection of even the most compassionate and well-designed teaching ... Over the years I've come to side with them in their refusal to be molded by a hostile society and have come to look upon not-learning as positive and healthy in many situations" (p. 2).

"Not-learning and unlearning are both central techniques that support changes of consciousness and help people develop positive ways of thinking and speaking in opposition to dominant forms of oppression" (p. 23).

Kohl, H. (1994). *I won't learn from you : And other thoughts on creative maladjustment*. New York, NY: New Press : Distributed by W.W. Norton.

1. How do you define learning?
2. What is learned at your public garden?
3. Who learns at your garden? When does learning occur?
4. Who is expected to learn? Is anyone exempt from learning?
5. Have you ever had to actively resist learning something? What was that experience like?
6. Have you ever needed to unlearn something? What was that process like?
7. In what kinds of circumstances might not-learning and unlearning be important and necessary strategies?
8. What are harmful and negative thoughts and behaviors in our society that need to be not-learned and unlearned?
9. What are some harmful or negative thoughts and behavior that exist in the public garden world?
10. What are some ways that we can build positive practices, interpretation, and structures in their place?
11. What are some ways you can support processes of learning, not-learning, and unlearning for visitors?

cultural capital //

“CRT [Critical Race Theory] shifts the center of focus from notions of White, middle class culture to the cultures of Communities of Color ... A traditional view of cultural capital is narrowly defined by White, middle class values ... CRT expands this view ... community cultural wealth is an array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and utilized by Communities of Color to survive and resist macro and micro-forms of oppression” (p. 77).

Yosso, T. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 8(1), 69-91.

1. How do you define cultural capital?
2. What are the relationships and overlaps between economic capital, cultural capital, and privilege?
3. If someone describes to you a person that is "educated and cultured" what are the characteristics and qualities that come to mind?
4. Who were public gardens originally constructed for and what were the original purposes and intentions of the public garden as a cultural institution?
5. In what ways has your public garden changed from this original intention over time? In what ways has it not changed?
6. In what ways does your public garden privilege certain forms of culture and cultural capital over others?
7. What kinds of assumptions and biases are embedded in this thinking?
8. Why is simply aiming to increase visitorship of people and communities of color not enough to decenter the garden from its White, dominant-normative core?
9. What are some ways your public garden can acknowledge, represent, and honor the knowledges and cultural wealth of Communities of Color?
10. How can we build responsible practices so we are not doing this work in the place of marginalized communities, or on their behalf, but providing the space, time, and resources for folks to represent themselves?

access //

“The public world is the world of strength, the positive (valued) body, performance and production, the non-disabled, and young adults. Weakness, illness, rest and recovery, pain, death, and the negative (devalued) body are private, generally hidden, and often neglected... Much of the experience of disability and illness goes underground, because there is no socially acceptable way of expressing it and having the physical and psychological experience acknowledged. Yet acknowledgment of this experience is exactly what is required for creating accessibility in the public world. The more a society regards disability as a private matter, and people with disabilities as belonging in the private sphere, the more disability it creates by failing to make the public sphere accessible to a wide range of people” (p. 40).

Wendell, S. (1996). *The rejected body : Feminist philosophical reflections on disability*. New York: Routledge

1. What are different ways one can access gardens?
2. What are visible and invisible barriers to accessing public gardens?
3. When you think of "accessibility", what comes to mind?
4. Do you make a distinction between access and accessibility? Why or why not?
5. Is accessibility a fundamental part of your public garden, or is it marginal and peripheral to the general operations?
6. Does the garden's approach to accessibility differ in the context of gardens and exhibitions vs. programming?
7. When you hear the term "disability," what comes to mind?*
8. In what ways do the needs of your visitors and staff shape your individual and institutional practices, processes, and output?
9. Is your garden an accessible workplace for its staff and employees? How so? How is it lacking?
10. What could a fully accessible public garden look like?

*To learn more about [able-bodied privilege](#) read “the body is not an apology”

public gardens as institutions //

In an institution like a public garden, there is usually a clearly laid out mission with core purposes, values, and a vision for the future guiding its operations. All of these inform how the public garden is going to invest its time and energy in projects and initiatives to move towards its envisioned future. The problem with gardens is not in the clarity of its messages. Rather, tensions arise from questions such as:

- Who developed this vision?
- Who benefits from this vision?
- Who was this future vision built for? Who is excluded from that future vision?

This section on institutional mapping is an important exercise for public garden employees who are engaging in social justice work. The issues we raise, and the people we are fighting for, fundamentally change the nature of these spaces. We are fighting for a change and transformation to the way the public garden exists within society, who it serves, what it does with its collections and resources, what kinds of spaces and experiences it provides.

So what would public gardens look like if your vision were brought to life? The role and responsibility of the public garden employee goes beyond growing and talking about plants. By occupying a position within a cultural institution, we must be the change-makers in these spaces. As a public garden employee:

- What is your future vision for your garden?
- What is your future vision for the public garden community?
- What does it look like? What does it feel like?
- Who is alongside you in this future vision?

While you may not always be afforded the time, money, and power to directly and immediately change policy within your public garden, we have the power to keep educating ourselves, our colleagues, and our visitors to begin transforming the culture of the garden. The culture of the garden is how people think and operate in the space. Once that is inspired, we begin to shape the underlying practices, external policies, and policies that uphold our institution. And by making those centered on inclusion, access, equity, and social justice, we affect greater change.

institutional mapping

Draw a map of your public garden.* You can choose how to illustrate this map (spatially, conceptually, etc). This map should reflect your personal understandings and experiences of your institution. Think about how your organization is structured, in particular, keep in mind power distributions and dynamics. *This can be tied to a specific garden, or used as an exercise in thinking through the general structure of public gardens.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for drawing a map of a public garden. The box is currently blank.

your current public garden as an institution

Use this page to do some thinking on the WHAT, HOW, and WHYs of the institution of public gardens as it stands now. Feel free to apply this framework to a specific garden, or to use it as a general thought exercise. Be honest about the reality of where public gardens are at. Dig into the entrenched and fundamental values, biases, and assumptions that shape and drive everything the public garden does and WHY so as to expose its philosophical underpinnings.

what is a public garden for?

mission + purposes

how does it achieve its mission and purposes?

experiences + initiatives

why?

what does a public garden offer?

content + curriculum

how does it offer this?

pedagogy + values

why?

who is the public garden for?

visitors + audiences

how is this cultivated?

access + barriers

why?

your vision for an inclusive, socially-just public garden

Based on the work you did on the previous slide, document your vision for how to transform public gardens into an inclusive, socially-just space. For this exercise, imagine the ways your garden's WHATs and HOWs will be shaped by justice-based values and commitments (its WHYs).

what is your public garden for?

mission + purposes

how does it achieve its mission and purposes?

experiences + initiatives

why?

what does your public garden offer?

content + curriculum

how does it offer this?

pedagogy + values

why?

who is your public garden for?

visitors + audiences

how is this cultivated?

access

why?

on structure

We started off this chapter with the question:
What needs to be deconstructed in public gardens?

It must be emphasized that there is little point in attempting critical practices while continuing to uphold the same oppressive structures and systems currently in place.

This means we need to have a serious examination of the role of public garden leaders not just from a philosophical standpoint but in relation to real issues of time, pay and salary, space, resources, and mentorship.

There is real passion and momentum building among nonprofit leaders to engage in the work of social justice from within the institution at all levels of power. Public gardens are voicing their declarations of commitment and support. But are gardens as institutions actually providing support and opportunities for their staff to enact the transformative change they invoke?

1. How does the public garden structure and organize its communication, resources, and staff?
2. Who are the employees at the public garden? What are the different roles that they have there?
3. What is the distribution of labor across departments?
4. How many full-time, part-time, and paid/unpaid positions are there?
5. How are roles and responsibilities spread across departments and staff?
6. How is power and decision making distributed across the organization?
7. What are the various formats and structures for "learning" in the public garden?
8. What structure and support (time, space, resources) is currently given to the work in each department?
9. What structure and support (time, space, resources) is currently given to pursue critical, social justice work?
10. How can this be improved?
11. How would you restructure your public garden?

on community

"I think we need to be wary: we need to work against the danger of evoking something that we don't challenge ourselves to actually practice"
(Hooks, 2003, p. 163).

What is a community? We hear the word used often in our work. It has entered the modern nonprofit lexicon yet what it truly means and what it is meant to stand for in the public garden context is still unclear. The word is often used as a code for People of Color (POC), but what is the true meaning of community? What distinguishes a community from a group of people? Why are communities important?

When using the term *community* in the public garden context, it is often in reference to communities of people *outside* of the institution. It is less frequent for us to take time to cultivate and build communities *within and among* public gardens. How can we possibly connect and build sustained relationships with communities of people outside the organization when folks internally within the institution are not yet working together?

1. What does community mean to you?
2. Is there a sense of community within your public garden?
3. Is there a community gathered (or gathering) around issues of social justice in your public garden?
4. How are people organizing themselves?
5. What are some strategies to continue cultivating a sense of community among staff across the garden?
6. When your staff refer to community (or communities), who are they talking about?
7. Does your public garden have ties to local/state/national/global communities?
8. What are the ways your public garden connects with these various communities?
9. What are some ways the garden can reach out to connect with more communities?
10. What are ways the garden can continue to build sincere and sustained relationships with these communities?

on quality

Just as the structures of the public garden need to reshape around new values and forms of critical practice, we also need to recalibrate our understandings and measures of quality. When our work authentically centers core principles of justice, anti-oppression, and liberation, our processes and outcomes will change in response. This will directly engage our ideologies on what the garden is for, what it should (or should not) be doing, and what it means for a public garden to be successful.

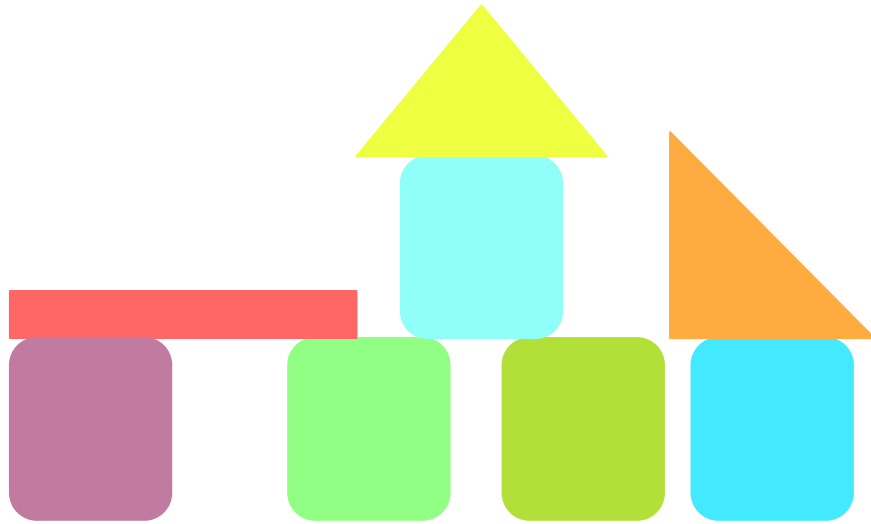
Building radical frameworks into modern nonprofit institutions does not mean overthrowing all sense of structure and quality. It deepens our commitments in practice. It asks harder questions and holds us sincerely accountable to the claims we make as public spaces for horticulture, botany, and learning.

Take some time to reflect on the various ways that public gardens, curators, educators, and visitors may understand and measure:

- Quality
- Success
- Risk
- and Failure

What is...?	How do public gardens define and measure this?	How do you define and measure this?	How might visitors define and measure this?
quality			
success			
risk			
failure			

warm-down //



Building capacity for social justice in public gardens requires sustained attention and action dedicated to self-work, as well as institutional organizing. It means constantly and simultaneously navigating and facilitating learning and growth within, among, and beyond ourselves. None of this work can happen in isolation. We cannot collectively move forward without laying bare our current disconnects and discords. Thus, the Dreamspace Project Workbook is meant to serve as a resource to help support and catalyze individual, departmental, cross-departmental, and institutional transformation.

Having gone through the first three chapters of the workbook, take some time to reflect:

- What efforts are currently happening at your garden?
- Do you have allies or like-minded colleagues that support you and your work at your public garden?
- Does your garden currently have a genuine, internal community gathered around issues of social justice?
- How can we build or strengthen community within the garden?
- Are efforts at your public garden occurring in isolation, in pockets, or holistically?
- What are some initiatives you can take as an individual to engage in this work?
- What are some initiatives you can build as a group or community within your public garden to engage in this work?
- Do you need any further materials or support?
- How can The Dreamspace Project Workbook support you and your garden?*

*Please feel free to reach out to Alyssa Machida at dreamspaceworkbook@gmail.com with any requests for support in adapting or implementing this workbook at your organization.

references

Ahmed, S. (2007). A phenomenology of whiteness. *Feminist Theory*, 8(2), 149-168.

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics. *The University of Chicago Legal Forum* 140:139-167.

Fiske, J. (1991). *Reading the popular*. London ; New York: Routledge.

hooks, b. (2003). *Teaching community : A pedagogy of hope*. New York: Routledge.

Kohl, H. (1994). *I won't learn from you : And other thoughts on creative maladjustment*. New York, NY: New Press : Distributed by W.W. Norton.

Krishnamurti, J. (1953). *Education and the significance of life*. New York: Harper.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2006). "Yes, but how do we do it?" practicing culturally relevant pedagogy. In Landsman, Landsman, Julie, & Lewis, Chance W. (Eds.), *White teachers, diverse classrooms : A guide to building inclusive schools, promoting high expectations, and eliminating racism* (p. 29-42). Sterling, Va: Stylus Pub.

Linklater, K., & Florian, Douglas. (1976). *Freeing the natural voice* (1st ed.). New York: Drama Book Specialists.

Repko, A. (2008). *Interdisciplinary research : Process and theory*. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Takemitsu, T., Kakudo, Yoshiko, & Glasow, Glenn. (1995). *Confronting silence : Selected writings* (Fallen Leaf monographs on contemporary composers ; 1). Berkeley, Calif.: Fallen Leaf Press.

Wendell, S. (1996). *The rejected body : Feminist philosophical reflections on disability*. New York: Routledge

Yosso, T. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 8(1), 69-91.

4



**Where
Dreams meet
Design**

Introduction //

This section has suggestions of activities you can do with a group at your public garden to build a collective understanding of what your staff envisions in the future and to begin to consider how you can build a more just institution. Some of this is repeated from other exercises above, but is reorganized to be used as a group session.

Speculative Design

"This form of design thrives on imagination and aims to open up new perspectives on what are sometimes called *wicked problems*, to create spaces for discussion and debate about alternative ways of being, and to inspire and encourage people's imaginations to flow freely. Design speculations can act as a catalyst for collectively redefining our relationship to reality" (p. 2).

how might we

DESIGN FOR

ALTERNATIVE FUTURES?

an exercise in group envisioning + speculative design

**If you were to redesign public gardens
based on values of intersectional inclusivity,
equity, and accessibility,
what would that look like?**

Materials

- **markers or sharpies**
- **post-its**
- **big poster paper**
- **enough space for small groups to break out**
- **be sure to document!**

Daydream your future vision for gardens (~10 mins)

Take a few minutes for individual daydreaming time to think through what is your personal vision for public gardens in the future. Try to be as specific and detailed in your visioning as possible.

If you are in a group setting, take some time as a group to share out ideas. Here are some potential guiding questions to prompt your thinking:

Where is your garden located?

What does the building look like from the outside as you arrive?

What does the area surrounding the public garden look like?

What does it feel like as you approach the building?

How do you feel as you walk into the garden?

What do you see at the entrance?

Who is there with you?

What are some things you notice, hear, smell?

Who is working at the garden?

What is the fee for entry?

What kinds of exhibitions are on display?

What kinds of plants and exhibitions does this garden have?

Who is represented in the public garden?

What kinds of programming is offered?

In what ways is the garden physically accessible?

What does it feel like to move through the space?

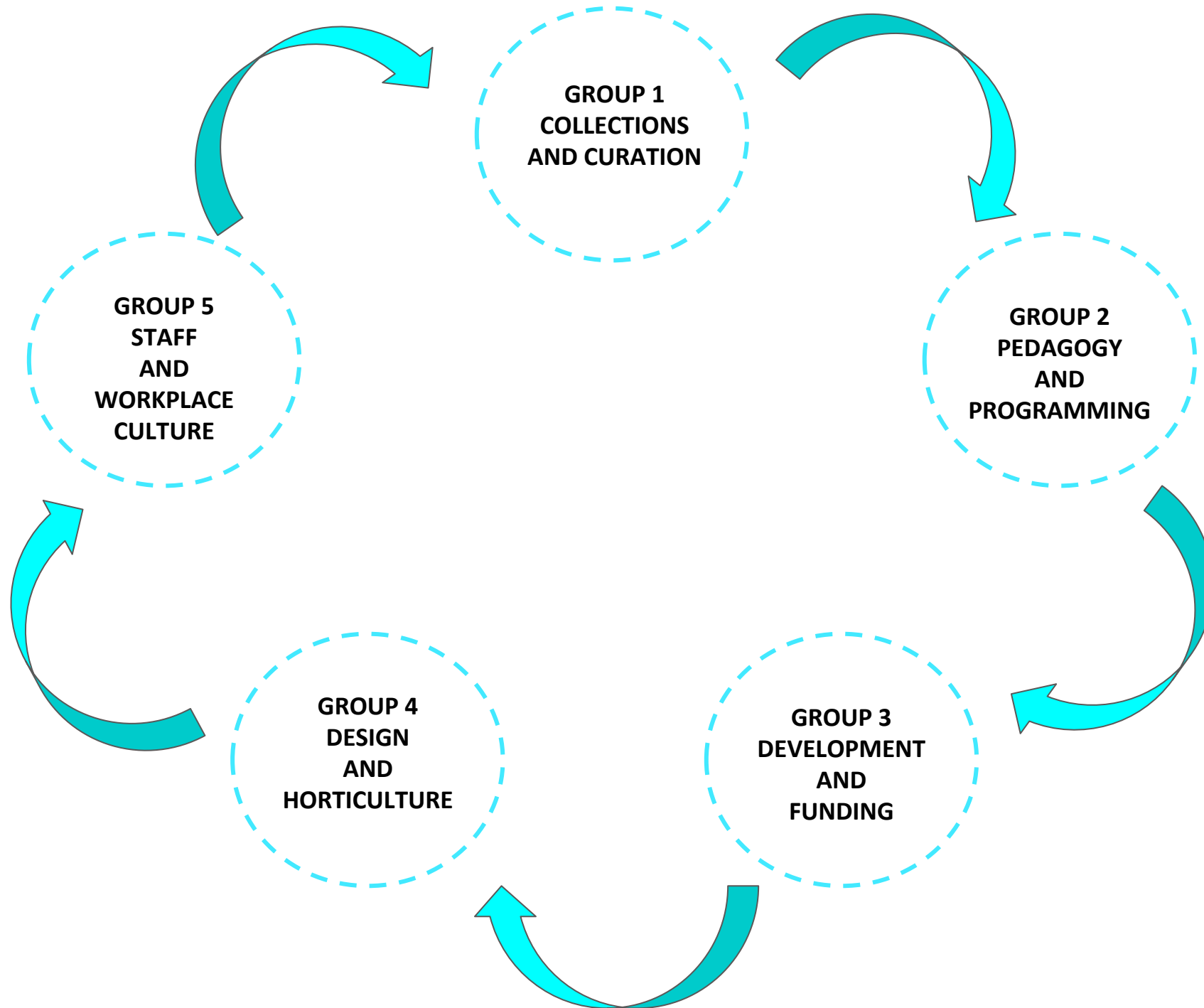
What senses does the garden engage?

How is the public garden funded?

In what ways is the public garden model sustainable?

Speculative Design Exercise (approx. 50+ mins)

1. Break out into 5 smaller groups
 - a. Collections + curation; pedagogy + programming; development + funding; design and horticulture; and staff + workplace culture
2. Set around 10 mins to spend at each section; small groups rotate through all sections
3. Each group should scribe their notes and thinking on poster paper, and leave the sheet of poster paper behind so the next group can review and build cumulatively
4. Feel free to use the prompts as a warm-up for your group's thinking or envision beyond the questions
5. After each group has been at each section, take some time to walk-around and view everyone's notes. be sure to document!
6. Have time set aside for group share-outs and discussions as a larger group



Prompts for Group Thinking

1. What is the current state of social justice in public gardens?
2. What is our desired future?
3. What needs to change, and how? What do we want to see next?
4. What are new and alternative models of structure/practice?
5. Who are the folks/where are the places that are already doing this work?
6. What are resources and models we can look to?
7. What are the barriers that might prevent us from making these changes?
8. How can we recruit allies across our organizations to help us make create new systems?

collections + curation

what are the plants and objects in a public garden's collections/holding, what is their processes for acquiring and developing new collections and exhibits, what are their criteria for valuing collections, how do they display and interpret the plants for their publics/visitors, who holds the positions and power to curate/interpret in public gardens, how do you consider the sustainability of horticulture and conservation practices, what are the practices of decolonization, and how do you build and sustain relationships with the traditional keepers of plant knowledge?

pedagogy + programming

what are the different kinds of experiences that public gardens provide for visitors ranging from educational to entertainment, what kinds of learning and educational theories guide the institution, what kinds of missions or initiatives drive the garden's work, what does the garden consider to be valid knowledge or experience, whose truth matters, who does the garden partner with and hire for programs, who does the garden welcome and provide access to, and in what ways?

development + funding

how is the garden are funded, who and/or what avenues provide this funding, where/how gardens find funding opportunities, how does a public garden's funds/funding impacts organizational behavior and initiatives, how are donors and patrons are cultivated, what impact does this have on the values, hierarchies, and practices of the public garden, and how does the garden consider or treat people differently depending on their ability to provide financial support to the institution?

design + horticulture

what is the location of the garden, what is their relationship to local communities and neighborhoods, issues of accessibility to the site as well as throughout the garden, who lived on the land before colonization and whether these histories are acknowledged, how is the space designed and laid out, who is welcome, and whose experiences are prioritized in the space, what does the architecture of the space communicate to people (visitors, and non-visitors), who has knowledge about how to grow plants, how are plants removed and how are they honored?

staff + workplace culture

who works in gardens, who is considered a qualified candidate for working in public gardens, what kinds of expertise, training, and "pedigree" are required and sought, what kinds of work environments these spaces are for employees, what are the ways oppressive behaviors and ideals are upheld in these spaces, and how do organizational structures and health impact the experiences and wellbeing of employees?

Debrief and Reflection

1



Be sure to document group and individual thinking!

After each group has discussed and taken notes for each section, provide some time for people to walk around and view the cumulative ideation.

2



Provide time to debrief.

Have each group share out some main highlights and key takeaways from their discussion.

3



Take some time to reflect on the relationship between your individual and group/collaborative visions for public gardens.

Keep building and iterating on these documents, let them grow as blueprints for emerging possibilities!

Our thanks to Alyssa Machida for all the work she has done to help our field critically examine ourselves and our institutions to support more justice oriented communities and out connections to plants and public gardens.

Thank you for participating in this work to make our cultural institutions more just and equitable.

Sonal Bhatt, Brooklyn Botanical Garden, Brooklyn, New York

Mollie Parsons and Tallie Segel, Santa Fe Botanical Garden, Santa Fe, New Mexico

Tracy Qiu, Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Erin Strauss, Science Museum of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minnesota;

Alyssa Machida is a writer, artist, and educator based in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She seeks projects, spaces, and co-workers committed to intersectional inclusivity, community-empowered organizing, and equity-based models for public engagement in arts and education. To connect with Alyssa, please don't hesitate to reach out at dreamspaceworkbook@gmail.com



Illustrated by Nimah Gobir