Leading for Equity in Challenging Times: Our Role as Leaders to Catalyze Change for Our Collective Well-being

with the National Equity Project
Kathleen Osta, Victor Cary, and Hugh Vasquez

April 24, 2020
Honoring the land and the people

We are coming to you from
Yokuts Land

Chochoeny / Ohlone Land

Kiikaapoi (Kickapoo) / Peoria /
Bodéwadmiakiwen (Potawatomi) / Miami / Očeti Šakówiŋ (Sioux) Land

https://native-land.ca/

@equityproject #CASELCARES #RebelLeader
What’s on top for you as you consider the importance of social emotional wellness, healing, and equity in these times?

@equityproject #CASELCARES #RebelLeader
#CASELCARES Collective Empathy Data
What We Heard

Ensuring that I am doing all I can to maintain active connection with students and provide meaningful supports

The emotional response of our students at the end of the COVID-19 Epidemic

Addressing the needs and trauma of my team while encouraging them to support and address the needs of the many we serve

Equitable access to health and wellness information for all families in time of great public health disparities

The best way to deliver services as well as how to engage parents and teachers in SEL during distance learning

Inequitable access to technology, coursework, and social and emotional supports

@equityproject #CASELCARES #RebelLeader
I believe that telling our stories, first to ourselves and then to one another and the world, is a revolutionary act. It is an act that can be met with hostility, exclusion, and violence. It can also lead to love, understanding, transcendence, and community.

Janet Mock
Redefining Realness

@equityproject #CASELCARES #RebelLeader
Core Belief

The role of leaders for equity is to make inequities visible; disrupt discourse, practices and policies that perpetuate inequities; and reimagine new ways to engage and co-design with our communities so that each child and adult learns, thrives and experiences a sense of belonging.
Core Belief

Our fates are linked; if one part of our human ecosystem is unwell, we are all negatively affected. Likewise, if all parts of our community are healthy and cared for, we all thrive.

@equityproject #CASELCAKRES #RebelLeader
An invitation to hold this metaphor

Looking in a mirror

Insight into myself – my beliefs, identity, experiences, strengths, fears

Looking out of a window

Insight into my context – my students, families, colleagues, schools, organization, community
Distance learning & working - the “new normal”

Equity issues exacerbated & exposed

Uncertain economy impacting all sectors

Humanity & kindness

@equityproject #CASELCARES #RebelLeader
In a real sense all life is interrelated. All [of us] are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.

Martin Luther King Jr.
Leading for Equity means taking responsibility for what matters to you.

Julian Weissglass
We are all impacted by the pandemic, but we are situated differently and have differential access to protection, care, and resources.

Structural inequities in our country mean that African American, Latino, and Native people are experiencing the greatest economic and physical harm.

Recognize Oppression
Our designs depend on how we frame a challenge. So we need a clear “window” to see how oppression may be at play in our context.

@equityproject #CASELCARES #RebelLeader
EQUITY LENS

Some truths...

The inequities in our systems, and for our young people, are even more visible now.

Further ones are emerging.

A stance...

Disruption and transformation - in service of equity - IS even more possible.
- Creation of “race” - denial of racism
- Racial segregation - “othering” - “breaking”
- Inequitable access to opportunities
- Harmful messaging in media, textbooks, government
- Erasure, silencing, structural violence
- Dehumanization

Systemic Oppression

@equityproject #CASELCARES #RebelLeader
Liberatory Design Mindsets

Take a few minutes to look these over!

Reflect on any that resonate for you!
POLL
out of these 5

Which of these Mindsets feels most important to you in this extended moment of disruption?

@equityproject #CASELCARES #RebelLeader
Equity Leadership

We are living in challenging times and are part of complex systems that our past experiences and training may not have sufficiently prepared us to understand and respond to in our role as equity leaders.
Rebels are people who break rules that should be broken. They break rules that hold them and others back, and their way of rule breaking is constructive rather than destructive. It creates positive change...

Rebel Leadership involves positive deviance.

Francesca Gino, Harvard Business School
Author, Rebel Talent
1. **SEE, ENGAGE and ACT Anew:**
   Take a stance of social solidarity not social distance

1. **Hold problem space open:**
   Tension between urgency to act (chaos) and emergence through mutual relationships (complexity)
   begin by listening to the stories of those closest to the pain

1. **Deal with anxiety:**
   Don’t underestimate the need to make room for emotions especially in virtual space because we are working on a fuzzy/permeable boundary between chaos and complexity.

@equityproject #CASELCARES #RebelLeader
Recognize Oppression

Our designs depend on how we frame a challenge. So we need a clear “window” to see how oppression may be at play in our context.
Attend to Healing

Doing equity work includes on-going healing from the effects of oppression to increase our agency for liberatory design.
Embrace Complexity
When the going gets messy, stay open to possibility. Powerful design emerges from the mess, not from avoiding it.

It’s more visible now

@equityproject #CASELCARES #RebelLeader
Opportunities for Innovation and Learning

Crisis offers massive opportunities for innovation and learning.

Once the crisis is over, the pressure for change is lost, behavior easily slips back.

@equityproject #CASELCARES #RebelLeader
You must find a way to get in the way and get in good trouble, necessary trouble.

...You have a moral obligation, a mission and a mandate, when you leave here, to go out and seek justice for all. You can do it. You must do it.

U.S. Representative John R. Lewis
Rebel Leaders Utilize SEL in ways that:

- Center healing & resisting oppression
- Advances collective well-being
- Reimagines relationships & learning environments
- Redistributes power
- Co-designs communities where we all belong and thrive

Academic & Social Emotional Wellness

Racial Equity & Social Justice

@equityproject #CASELCARES #RebelLeader
We will not go back to normal. Normal never was. Our pre-corona existence was not normal other than we normalized greed, inequity, exhaustion, depletion, extraction, disconnection, rage, hoarding, hate and lack. We should not long to return, my friends. We are being given the opportunity to stitch a new garment. One that fits all of humanity and nature.

Sonya Renee Taylor
thebodyisnotanapology.com

#RebelLeader
JOIN US!

What do you feel committed to doing now or carrying forward?

Tweet @equityproject
#RebelLeader
#CASELCARES

@equityproject #CASELCARES #RebelLeader