PATHWAYS TO THE FUTURE:

BRAINSTORM CARDS

Action-oriented brainstorming prompts to help your organization identify opportunities for equitable change at the intersection of COVID-19 and racial justice.
How can your organization respond to COVID and the racial justice movement in a way that advances equity? Use these six shifts to prompt discussion and generate actions that can make your organization — and our world — a more just place.

**Use these cards to:**
- Reflect on your individual role in perpetuating and dismantling inequity
- Identify your growth areas around equity
- Generate actions that could make your organization a more equitable place to work
- Develop ideas to make your services or programs more equitable
- Design future solutions

**WHO IS THIS TOOL FOR?**
Leaders committed to making more equitable decisions within their organizations and with the communities they participate in (clients, partners, neighbors).

**HOW TO USE THIS TOOL**

(4-10 PARTICIPANTS | 1-2 HOURS)

**STEP 1**

**CHALLENGE**
Start with a challenge or problem in mind. Assemble a team of diverse thinkers. Ask yourself: who’s not at this table that should be? This work will be most effective when it’s co-created with the people who stand to be most impacted.

**STEP 2**

**BRAINSTORM**
Randomly select one of the cards. Set a timer for 15-20 minutes to come up with as many ideas as possible. Repeat for as many cards as desired. This step can be done individually or with a group.

*Tip: Use a shared Google doc or a virtual whiteboard (like Mural) to capture ideas collaboratively in real-time.*

**STEP 3**

**SHARE**
Share ideas with your team. Where are there similarities? Where is there energy? Build on the best ones. Then reflect: which ones are the most important to do now? Which need to inform our long-term work? Which will have the most impact?

**STEP 4**

**CHECK**
Check your biases. Who was considered in these actions? Whose perspective wasn’t? Who do we need to engage to ensure these actions are inclusive, equitable, and not causing harm?

**STEP 5**

**ACT**
With your team, decide on four or five actions that your organization wants to prioritize. Build an action plan that considers what needs to get done, who needs to be involved, and how you’ll measure progress along the way.
CARDS
INEQUITY AWAKENED

FROM: PASSIVE AWARENESS
TO: ACTIVE RESISTANCE

Sparked by the murder of George Floyd, we’re seeing long-overdue calls to upend racism in all corners of society. Though people of color have experienced racist systems all their lives, the mainstreaming of racial justice is awakening consciousness among (primarily white) Americans to the prevalence of anti-Black racism—and their own roles within it. Where rhetoric is backed up with action, we see progress. Resources and donations are flowing to Black-led organizers. Public support for dismantling oppressive structures within systems, companies, and ourselves is growing rapidly. Together, we are building our stamina for the action-oriented work of anti-racism.

HOW MIGHT WE...

• How might we explore and embody racial justice within our own lives and work?

• How might we understand and dismantle our own entanglements with racist systems?

• How might we move beyond rhetoric to action?

• How might we work to be actively anti-racist?
THE RISE OF REST AND HEALING

FROM: GRIND CULTURE
TO: RESTORATIVE SLOWDOWN

As the pandemic forces a slowdown, we are welcoming the opportunity to pause and take better care of ourselves and each other. Individually, a rise in mindfulness practices and self-care is centering reflection, growth, and learning over “being right.” Simultaneously, Americans are recognizing that, in order to do better in the future, we must name, repair, and heal from past harms. Healing practices and resources are growing, from safe spaces for people of color to open spaces centered around dialogue and reconciliation.

HOW MIGHT WE...

• How might we shift cultural values to embrace rest and reflection as a core part of any sustainable system?

• How might we acknowledge trauma and address its root causes?

• How might we prioritize healing as we rebuild our communities?

• How might we reclaim our wholeness in the name of liberation?

• How might we deepen our understanding of the connection between the health of our inner selves and the health of our country?
FROM SERVICE TO POWER-BUILDING

FROM: SERVICES AND PROGRAMS
TO: COMMUNITY-LED POWER

While demand for emergency assistance from philanthropy and nonprofits is skyrocketing, many are recognizing that sustainable change must go beyond programs and center community-led efforts. Organizations are acting as facilitators, working with residents and building their capacity to affect change. The ability to organize and build power among communities is becoming increasingly essential to the social sector’s sustainability and impact.

HOW MIGHT WE...

• How might we center decision-making by those most impacted by inequity?

• How might we lift up and extend grassroots efforts?

• How might we ensure communities are proximate not only to power, but to those who have the power to make change?

• How might we rebuild in a way that empowers community leaders as experts and goes beyond engagement toward community ownership?

• How might we use programs as a tool to transfer power?
INTERCONNECTED COLLECTIVE

FROM: INDIVIDUALISTIC SELF-PRESERVATION TO: CONNECTED SOLIDARITY

As Americans make personal sacrifices to “flatten the curve,” our individual interests are giving way to a growing sense of interdependence and solidarity with all those with whom we share the world is growing. Funders are looking past competing interests to launch unrestricted Coronavirus relief funds and forge new partnerships. Hyperlocal mutual aid networks are being built on the premise that everyone is able to contribute and able to receive. By prioritizing communal gain over self-interest, we are strengthening our social ecosystems.

HOW MIGHT WE...

• How might we leverage collaboration to extend our impact and reach?

• How might we continue to foster collectivism in our culture and work?

• How might we consider impact to the greater good over our personal gain?
Not surprisingly, gaps in tech access are exacerbating inequities from remote learning to remote working. But our rapid reliance on digital comes with more complex implications. Public debates are simmering over facial recognition at Amazon and Facebook’s treatment of hate speech. Scrutiny is increasing around tech regulation, access, surveillance, and algorithm design—for whom, by whom? As our reliance on tech grows while we navigate largely unchartered territory, digital domains are evolving as a critical battleground for equity.

**HOW MIGHT WE...**

- How might we reconsider who benefits from data to ensure it serves all communities?

- How might we leverage data to drive transparency and accountability within our organizations?

- How might we design digital solutions that scale equity and inclusion?

- How might we increase human connection and increase civility across the digital space?
HUMANE CAPITALISM

FROM: MAXIMIZING ECONOMIC CAPITAL
TO: MAXIMIZING HUMAN CAPITAL

Increasing consciousness around racial and economic inequities is shifting American’s expectations around the role of capitalism, government, and our economic systems. “Re-opening” during a pandemic is raising questions about what’s more valuable: our economy or our lives? Many Americans, especially in younger generations, are demanding a more inclusive form of capitalism that centers well-being over capital gains.

Embody and encourage an ethos of people over profit?

HOW MIGHT WE...

- How might we create the conditions for generosity and empathy over fear and uncertainty?

- How might we embody and encourage an ethos of people over profit?

- How might we reimagine what and who “thriving” economy requires?

- How might we shift our economic work model to create the necessary time and space that humans need to thrive?
Design Impact is a social innovation nonprofit that designs inclusive and creative approaches to complicated social problems.

We combine design, social justice, and leadership practice to address pressing issues, equip communities, and inspire social change.

The cards were inspired by our 2020 report, Pathways to the Future: Finding Opportunities at the Intersection of COVID-19 and Racial Equity.
