

# REFLECTING ON THE CURRENT MOMENT WITH SYSTEMS CHANGE PRACTITIONERS

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Community Engagement for Equitable  
Systems Change

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# Overview and Methodology

This a high-level theme analysis from the four main questions asked on July 14, 2020, Current Moment with Systems Change Practitioners gathering.

Notes taken during the gathering provided the data used for the thematic analysis. A in vivo coding methodology was selected to keep and articulate the integrity of the words used and described by participants. A final edit included the modification for consistency of any language that could be marginalizing in its use.



The high-level themes that emerged included **increase in solidarity due to heightened awareness or acknowledgement, less resistance to change, and complexity.**

## WHAT IS DIFFERENT THIS TIME AROUND?

**People are moving towards solidarity due to the heightened awareness and acknowledgment:**

The cycle of history and racism includes the murder of Black folks and the inequities due to COVID. White supremacy culture and being complicit in it, and connecting the dots to other movements are harnessing power in networks (locally and globally) across social media and solidarity of other marginalized groups working to undo anti-Blackness.

**There is less resistance to change and the need for change, making the momentum wider:**

People have hope and recognize the potential for youth leadership.

**There is a lot of complexity to what is happening:**

There is an acknowledgment of no quick fixes and the need for long-term changes and flexibility.



The high-level themes that arose included **the confluence of multiple issues with the pandemic and organizing.**

**WHAT ARE THE  
CONDITIONS THAT LED  
US TO THIS CURRENT  
MOMENT?**

#### **The confluence of multiple issues with the pandemic:**

Our systems that operate in silos continue to retraumatize and support the ongoing history and suffering (racism/anti-Blackness) in Black/Brown/Indigenous communities.

The misuse/abuse of power by police converges with capitalism and the greed of corporations, white entitlement, willful ignorance, and hateful leadership at the highest levels.

COVID-19's disproportional effects on race and gender expose the oppressive and unbearable social distancing impacts on solidarity.

#### **Organizing:**

Our current conditions have allowed for a sophisticated case by the elevated voice of leaders and civil disobedience pushing leaders to act. There is a mindset of isolationism vs. participation in the global community.



**WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS THAT ARE NOW PRESENT BECAUSE OF COVID-19 THAT WERE NOT PRESENT BEFORE THE PANDEMIC OR MURDER OF GEORGE FLOYD?**

High-level themes included changing details of life due to **COVID-19**, reflections and awareness of existing systems, disruption to existing, systems, organizing, and inspiration and hope.

**COVID-19 has heightened or changed particular details of life:**

With COVID is affecting everyone (globally), the disparities between the wealthy and working-class have softened and primed the system for change. The elevation of racism as emerged as a public health crisis.

**Reflection and awareness of existing systems perceived differently:**

The existing safety net is unable to do anything. Coming at this from a technical solution is not possible for white folks.

We recognize work/life more fully and the liability that inaction is more significant than maintaining a system that does not work for everyone. The moderate middle is leaning into unlearning and learning about systemic oppression the perpetuation of harmful acts.

**Existing systems are being challenged and disrupted:**

A disruption to white supremacy practices is motivating a run into discomfort instead of running away. The lines between work and home are normalized to show the full breadth of humanity.

**Organizing:**

As organizing is happening on all fronts (self-organizing in neighborhoods, digital organizing, anti-racism, and abolition), there is an acknowledgment that the movement may lose white folks after the spotlight is gone. Things begin to go back to the way that they were.

**Inspiration and hope:**

Yet, new daily values and shifts remain, and we continued to extend grace – value and welcome the whole person.



## IN WHAT WAYS HAVE THE CURRENT EVENTS DISRUPTED OR DEEPEDED YOUR PARADIGM, YOUR WORLD VIEW, YOUR THEORY OF CHANGE?

### Disrupt

#### Changes to the Existing Systems

An openness for something radical and different, the urgency to talk about and make a change, and balancing speed and opportunity push solutions to operate outside of the incremental change model and acknowledge that we can be at different cycles moving forward (change is iterative). Invoking how the community is involved in decision-making and making the time and space for the decision-making to happen is top of mind. Leveraging organizing and creating solidarity across imaginary borders and global now with social media breaking down actual borders.

#### Personal Change

People are discovering they have power and can take over and drive our destiny. Acknowledgment that silence and perpetuate white supremacy and unlearning what I need to understand for myself.

### Deepened

We can be more powerful working together; thus, there is a need for deepened love as a public good, radical, and changed by urgency.

