

EMPOWERING PARTICIPATION: BUILDING A HEALTH EQUITY ACTION PLAN THROUGH STAFF ENGAGEMENT



Araceli Rivera

Fabiola Espinosa

Nora Mallonee Brand

Rocio Rodriguez

October 2, 2024

SPEAKERS



Araceli Rivera

Program Planning and
Evaluation Analyst



Fabiola Espinosa

Program Planning and
Evaluation Analyst



Rocio Rodriguez

Health Equity Program
Manager



**Nora Mallonee-
Brand**

Health, Policy Planning,
and Equity Manager

WORKSHOP STRUCTURE

1 Hour

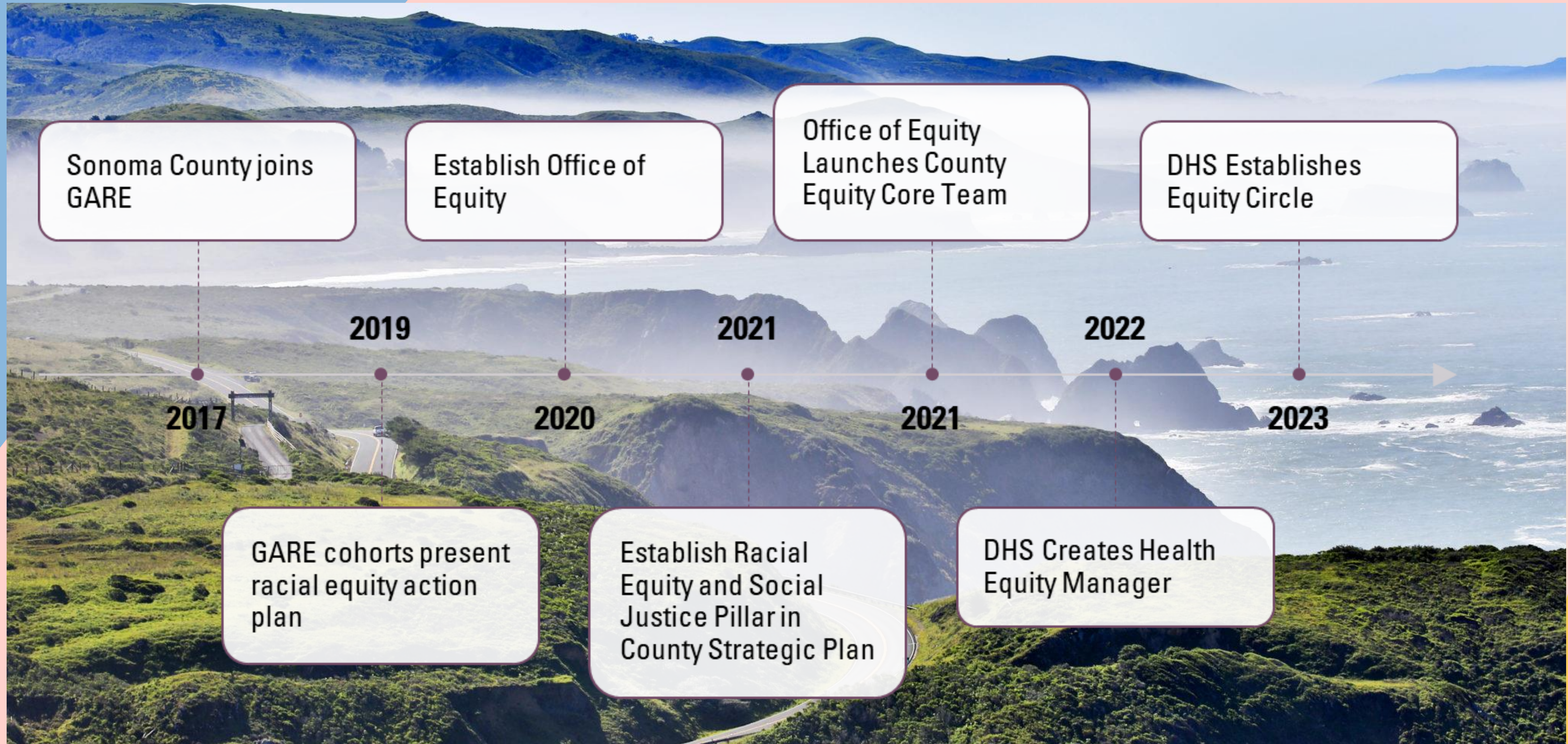
30 minutes
presentation
. 30 min for
activity.

Take care of
your needs -
snacks,
movement,
water

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

- Identify key milestones and strategies that led to the creation of the Equity Circle in Sonoma County DHS
- Develop strategies for engaging and securing leadership backing to drive equity efforts
- Explore best practices in creating a race-forward participatory process for a department equity circle
- Create network of support among peers for learning and mutual assistance in equity work
- Design an outline of your own equity circle design

ABOUT US



EQUITY CORE TEAM – BACKGROUND

- **It starts with us!**
 - We all have a story of why and how we started this work
 - Intention & Process to join OOE's Core Team
- **Equity Champions Unite**
 - In April 2021, 76 Equity Champions, representing 25 County Departments helped launch the first Equity Core Team
 - This first cohort helped expand the Office of Equity's capacity to begin its work in alignment with the Racial Equity and Social Justice pillar of the County's 5-year Strategic Plan



EQUITY CORE TEAM – BACKGROUND

- **Ready, set, go!**
 - Core Team members participated in the following:
 - **Racial Equity Foundations Training**
 - Worked in racial affinity groups to learn about equity principles and skills, concepts and definitions, history of racism in the U.S. and Sonoma County, and to help build relationships with other employees in the County.
 - **Facilitation Training**
 - A three-day intensive workshop on how to navigate and lead conversations about race.
 - **Anti-racist Results-Based Accountability Training**
 - to develop technical expertise in Anti-Racist Results-Based Accountability (AR RBA) methodology.
- **Beyond Core Team - OOE Steering Committee**
 - In addition to the opportunities mentioned, Equity Core Team members were invited to apply to be part of the OOE Steering Committee.
 - To work with the OOE and co-develop the Racial Equity Action Plan



EQUITY CORE TEAM – BACKGROUND

- **We're trained, NOW WHAT?**
 - Once OOE trainings were over, DHS Core Team Members felt incomplete...now what?
- **The work must continue - Addressing racism & inequities within DHS**
 - DHS's Equity Manager invited Core Team members to meet and discuss the possibility of initiating an internal "Core Team" to address racism and inequities within DHS.
- **DHS's first Equity Circle**
 - DHS's Equity Manager in collaboration with DHS Core Team members created a semi-formal process and plan to start DHS's first Equity Circle cohort



VISION FOR DHS EQUITY CIRCLE

Purpose

Create a team of equity champions who will work together to align department efforts and priorities to support racial equity, diversity, and belonging

Essential Elements

- Action Oriented
- Create equity champions
- De-Silo
- Relationship Building
- Leadership Team (formal and informal)
- “Engine for Change”



BRIEF UPDATE

- Iterative process of writing a Health Equity Action Plan
- 5 month process of strategic priorities using Anti-Racist Results Based Accountability (AR-RBA) framework
- Equity Circle input, staff focus groups, surveys used to develop Strategic Priorities
- Smaller group self-selected who are interested in diving deeper into AR-RBA starting October
- Co-wrote performance measures





BEST PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES

BEST PRACTICES FOR EQUITY CIRCLE

- **Have a shared goal:**
 - All of the work of the Circle was in service of the creation and adoption of a Department Health Equity Action Plan
- **Build a strong foundation:**
 - Through theory, history, and personal narrative the Circle developed shared language, strengthened relationships, and built trust
- **Resource appropriately:**
 - Dedicated Health Equity staff and County Core Team provided support and leadership; Department leadership were bought-in and supportive; Activated available funding
- **Recruit the right people:**
 - Recruited participants across the organization with intention; Vetted through a transparent application and interview process; Looked for folks with passion!
- Participatory Process for Inclusion
- Power dynamics and decision making process were noted

LESSONS LEARNED

- Importance of Affinity Space, but also the need for clear articulation of roles
- Need to build internal harm repair muscle
- Awareness of and ways to address the power/and other dynamics from our day-to-day that seep into the Equity Circle
- Need for leadership to also be engaged in "the work"
 - Supports buy in from leadership
 - Sets expectations with Equity Circle and avoid disappointment when we are not in alignment with timing or when leadership doesn't get it/sets it back

**BEST PRACTICE DEEP
DIVE: BUILDING A
STRONG FOUNDATION**



RACE EQUITY FOUNDATIONS 3 DAY RETREAT

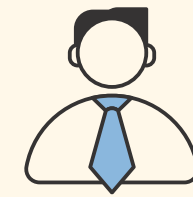
- Designed to build a common understanding of foundational equity principles
- Hired diverse group of facilitators that understood challenges and themes with government employees
- Staff were hesitant for different reasons
- First time for many of us:
 - to realize biases and learn from them
 - to have difficult conversations about race equity
 - to acknowledge there are power dynamics
- Activities forced us to engage with each other in a different way and get to know each other as humans and not just co-workers

LEARNINGS

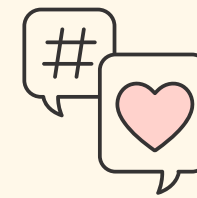


- **Vulnerability and Uncomfortable conversations**
 - Group Agreements
 - Modeling vulnerability
 - Self-Reflection: take learnings, not names
- **Safe Spaces**
 - Affinity Spaces
 - Time for decompressing and processing
 - Journaling
- **De-Silo**
 - Community building that forced us as staff from different levels of management to come together to share and find commonalities

BREAK OUT ACTIVITIES



Discuss, share, and brainstorm with your table neighbors



You have about 30 minutes to review and discuss the worksheets and learnings



We'll end about 5 minutes before to share reflections

Brainstorm

BEGIN MAPPING

Who could be part of your core group/steering committee?	Which colleagues would you like to invite to apply to the equity circle?	Who are your allies in leadership?	Who are your allies in your department?	What are your next steps to get approval?
Write notes here	Write notes here	Write notes here	Write notes here	Write notes here

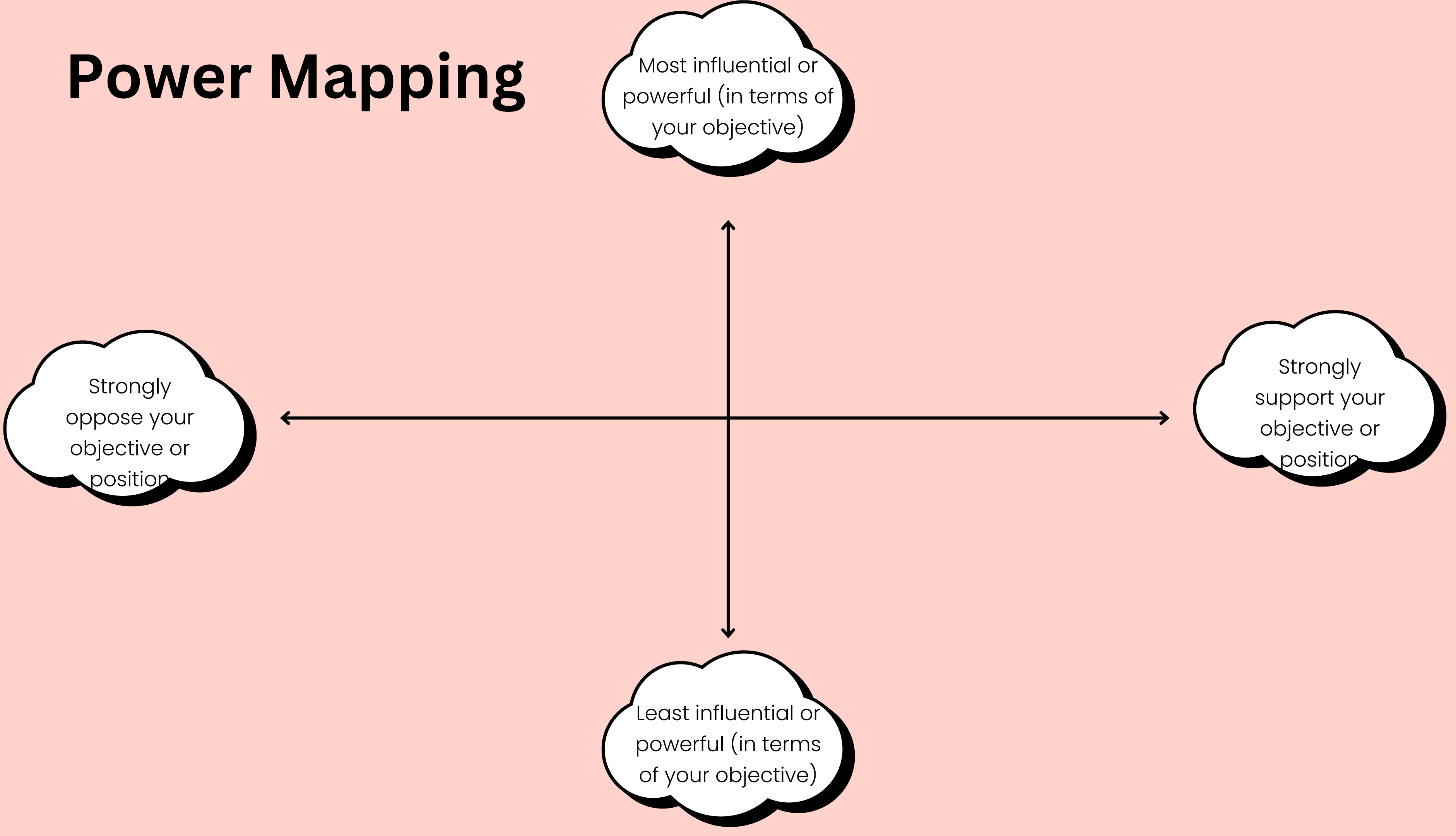
Power Mapping

Most influential or powerful (in terms of your objective)

Strongly oppose your objective or position

Strongly support your objective or position

Least influential or powerful (in terms of your objective)



**THANK YOU
FOR
LISTENING!**

Araceli Rivera

Araceli.rivera@sonoma-county.org

Fabiola Espinosa

Fabiola.Espinosa@sonoma-county.org

Nora Mallonee-Brand

Nora.mallonee-brand@sonoma-county.org

Rocio Rodriguez

Rocio.rodriquezcasquete@sonoma-county.org

RESOURCE Page

- Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE)
 - Racial Equity Core Teams: The Engines of Institutional Change
- Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiatives (BARHII)
- Consultants
 - Equity and Results
 - Just Process
 - Be the Change

