

Final Report: Anti-Oppressive Accountability Ad-Hoc Committee (MAR)

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Mid-Atlantic Region of the American Music Therapy Association

June 14, 2021

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Overview

Charge

Review and examine the oppressive structures that perpetuate harm to historically and systemically marginalized stakeholders of the region, explore alternative organizational structures, and present initial findings to the board.

Plain Language Summary

We will be examining the ways that the Executive Board operates which perpetuate harm to BIPOC, LGBTQIA2+, and disabled stakeholders; exploring new ways of doing things; and presenting what we find to the MAR Executive Board during the Spring meeting. In recognizing that at the time of the charge, the executive board was entirely white passing, and historically so, this ad-hoc is actively working to mitigate harmful practices and structures within the MAR Executive Board. This represents the initial phase of a much longer process toward becoming an anti-oppressive organization.

Acknowledgments

The ad-hoc would like to thank every person who participated in this initial data gathering phase. We recognize and greatly value the shared experiences of each person, as well as the emotional labor required to engage in anti-oppressive topics. We are particularly grateful for the time spent gathering resources and learning, and hope that each member of the MAR-EB can review the resources that we have compiled. Many interviewees were able to process their experiences through the interview process, and we are honored to have been witnesses to this process. We also noted that many interviewees appeared to benefit from engaging with the topic, and we highly recommend that conversations continue on the MAR EB so that all members may have the opportunity to engage with DEI topics on a regular basis.

We also must note the irony in the formality of this written document, as one of the findings of this ad-hoc is the ‘worship of the written word’ being a remnant of white supremacy culture. This document has been created in an effort to increase transparency for all stakeholders. We recognize that formalized written documents are not the preferred form of knowledge sharing and gain for many. If anyone would like to reach out to the ad-hoc to engage in other forms of knowledge sharing, we welcome the opportunity.

Methods

Timeline

Period	Tasks
October 2020	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MAR fall business meeting, ad-hoc was formed and given a charge from the EB 2. First official meeting of the ad-hoc <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Wrote plain language summary b. Constructed questions for the interviews c. Established who to interview d. Wrote open call to be disseminated via newsletter
November 2020	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Began interviews
December 2020 - February 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conducted interviews 2. Ad-hoc met regularly
March - April 2021:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conducted final interviews 2. Prepared for MAR regional conference presentation 3. Began data distillation process 4. Presented status at 3/21/21 EB meeting <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ad-hoc requested extension until summer transition meeting to complete charge
May 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Data distillation process continued 2. Began data analysis process <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Formulated themes 3. Began to formulate recommendations
June 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Final data analysis conducted 2. Recommendations created 3. Final report written

Data Collection

Interviews

This section details the process and procedures for the interviews: how and why the questions provided for the interviews were chosen, communication to membership that occurred, interview procedures, and recording and confidentiality.

Questions from the Anti-Oppressive Ad Hoc Committee.

The questions used for the interviews were constructed following the guidelines for anti-oppressive organizations as presented by the Anti- Oppressive Resource and Training Alliance (AORTA; Appendix A). Members of the ad-hoc familiarized themselves with the resource and reworded the main categories into questions; in this way, the ad-hoc did not impose any of their own assumptions about anti-oppressive practice into the construction of the questions.

Interview Procedures.

Scheduling Interviews. The ad hoc reached out to leaders of MAR-AMTA committees both during executive board meetings and individually through email. We first reached out by asking people's preferred availability (Appendix B). This availability was put into a chart document to keep track of availability of both the interviewer and interviewee (Appendix C). Follow-up emails were sent as needed.

Additionally, announcements were also offered to MAR-AMTA stakeholders (current members and non-members) through three primary outlets: email, social media, and at membership meetings (Appendix D). At each MAR-AMTA membership and business meeting following the start of the ad-hoc, a designated member of the ad-hoc spoke about progress and tasks. Communication with the executive board was identified as an important component of the work of the ad-hoc, especially in an effort to increase transparency with all stakeholders and recognize the immediate needs of historically marginalized groups.

Conducting Interviews.

Interviews were conducted through Zoom. The ad-hoc requested that these interviews be recorded to support data analysis, as well as to create a reconsultable record through video. These videos also allowed for increased reliability of results, as multiple members of the ad-hoc were able to view interview content. Based on interviewee preference, some interviews were recorded and others were not. In the cases of those who chose not to be recorded, the interviewer transcribed the interview throughout. Select interviewees chose to type out personal responses to questions; these were emailed to the interviewer. Additionally, it should be noted that some interviewees requested to not have their videos uploaded to a shared google drive folder. In these cases, the chosen interviewer utilized a member-checking process to ensure acceptable reliability.

All data (excluding those who chose to remain completely private) including videos, typed out interviewee/interviewer transcription, and typed out personal responses were stored in a private file on the MAR-AMTA Government Relations Chair G-Suite Email Drive. The email addresses that had access to these files were MAR-AMTA Government Relationships Chair (CJ Shiloh), MAR-AMTA Government Relations Chair- Elect (Stephenie Sofield), MAR-AMTA Immediate Past President (Michael Viega), and MAR-AMTA Secretary (Lauren Stoner).

De-Identification Process. Most interviewees expressed significant fear regarding completing interviews. Anonymity was guaranteed to the best of the interviewers' abilities. Adjustments were made for those interviewees who felt unsafe with all four members of the ad-hoc having access to interview content. To address anonymity, only the four members of the ad-hoc had access to the folder where videos, data distillation, data analysis, and results documents were kept. On June 14, 2021, the entire folder was deleted from the Government Relations Google Drive. Additionally, all email correspondence with interviewees was deleted as well. A separate folder was created for the next ad-hoc. The folder contains only the contents of this document. To further protect the anonymity of interviewees, interviewees were given random computer-generated alphanumeric codes, which can be found on the documentation of the ad hoc's time and task sheet.

Regional Conference Concurrent Session: "Initial Findings of the MAR Anti-Oppressive Accountability Ad Hoc Committee"

While discussing how the MAR EB may begin to be more transparent with membership, the VP of Conference Planning Elect suggested that the ad-hoc present at the regional conference. The ad-hoc chose to use this session time for attendee reflection of the interview questions, as well as communication about the ad hoc's charge, the ad-hoc's progress, resources gathered and implemented, achievements, and general preliminary distilled results. The ad-hoc also encouraged those in attendance to submit their responses/reflections of the questions anonymously through google doc form offered in the chat of the presentation. This data was added to the results.

[Link to conference presentation slides.](#)

Questions From Presentation Audience

- Thank you for sharing the AORTA document. How do the action(s) taken by this committee (i.e. questions/interviews of current board/committee members) align with the document's suggestions for "interruption and change-making"? Are there other past or future planned actions that have happened outside of the board/committee interviews that align with this guiding document?

- I have seen a number of posts from music therapists on social media that equate state recognition/regulation with oppressive practices. As members of this ad hoc committee but also of the MAR Executive Board, what is your response to this view?
- Are affinity groups being collaborated with for the goals of the committee?

Data Collation, Distillation, and Analysis

The interviews served as the primary source of data. Each member of the ad hoc committee was assigned to watch and transcribe a set of interviews. The transcriptions of each interview, i.e. the raw data, were distilled and coded. The members of the ad hoc met frequently to discuss each interview, collaborate and debrief. The following steps were taken towards analysis, mirroring the processes of thematic qualitative analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

1. **Familiarisation with the data:** Each member became familiar with every interview across various stages of data generation. Members read each other's raw data summaries and analytic notes. Then, meeting via Zoom, each member read their data summaries aloud and group distillation notes were created. This process allowed us to become deeply familiar and immersed with the content of each interview.
2. **Coding:** Going question by question, each interview was distilled and given a label that began to identify important features of the data that might be relevant to answering the research question. These codes were collated to bring to our group meetings for discussion.
3. **Generating initial themes:** This phase involved examining the codes and collated data together as a group to identify significant broader patterns of meaning (potential themes). Group collation notes were created.
4. **Reviewing themes:** This phase involved going over initial themes when discussing each interview to determine that they tell a convincing story of the data, and one that answers the research question. Patterns of shared meaning underpinned by a central concept or idea began to emerge. Saturation began to occur, signaling a shift to the next stage.

5. **Defining and naming themes:** This phase involved developing a detailed analysis of each theme, working out the scope and focus of each theme, and determining the 'story' of each. It also involves deciding on an informative name for each theme.
6. **Writing up:** This final phase involved weaving together the analytic narrative and data extracts, and contextualising the analysis in relation to existing literature.

Results

Categories that define white supremacy culture were utilized to organize the primary themes that arose from the raw interview data. Given that challenging white supremacy culture is inherently linked to becoming an anti-oppressive organization, it is important to view these interviews within this framework to help gain common language and understanding for the Executive Board to work with. It is also important to note that many oppressive actions, such as ableism, homophobia/transphobia, etc., fall under the umbrella of white supremacy culture. Thus, beginning to name and address structures that align with white supremacy culture will also address other oppressive actions unconsciously perpetrated by those structures.

Definitions for each category have been provided. Ad-hoc committee members did not create the definitions; instead definitions have been written in accordance with anti-oppressive resources (Appendix E; <https://www.whitesupremacyculture.info>). Within each category related to the characteristics of white supremacy culture we have three headings: First is “How it manifests.” This is related to how interviewees describe how white supremacy culture is embedded within the day-to-day activities of the MAR-AMTA and AMTA. Second is “Consequences,” which speaks to how white supremacy culture has impacted and harmed marginalized members and non-members within the MAR-AMTA. Third, “Other Options” provides initial alternative responses to white supremacy culture that interviewees and anti-oppressive resources offered.

Fear

The category of fear is defined as “White supremacy culture's number one strategy is to make us afraid. When we are afraid, we lose touch with our power and become more easily manipulated by the promise of an illusory safety.”

How it Manifests

Marginalized members who were interviewed discussed a variety of ways that fear is manifested within organizational spaces. For example, many report not speaking up in meetings in fear of being labeled as a troublemaker, as well as not being understood due to English being a second language. For many BIPOC members just being in white majority spaces evokes fear related to the harm of institutional racism; i.e. the MAR-AMTA is a microcosm of white supremacy culture embedded within most structural institutions in the United States. This fear of not offending or upsetting white members of the board was prevalent in almost all of the interviews - a majority of interviewees confirmed the anonymity of their interviews several times, for fear of board members viewing the content. This parallels many of the actions of the MAR EB, which can be driven by fear of upsetting the white status quo.

Many people interviewed exhibited fear and discomfort when it came to speaking about marginalized identities, including gender, gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, and race. This fear presented as being afraid to say the wrong thing, avoiding answering questions about

identity, or engaging in identity erasure. Several interviewees noted present and past board member's change in affect and voice when responding to BIPOC members during meetings, and several interpreted this as fear of non-white people.

Consequences

Marginalized members who have served in a variety of capacities for the MAR-AMTA have reported they do not feel safe for a variety of reasons, which impacts decisions to not volunteer within the Region (not running for elected positions for instance), marginalized members not being able to feel they can be authentically represented, and no trust that the MAR-AMTA is actually helping them or their clients. Fear of engaging incorrectly with folks of differing sociocultural locations may result in less engagement of any capacity. This results in decisions that reflect only the interests of those who feel safe engaging with the MAR-AMTA.

Other Options

Marginalized members discussed how fostering and nurturing authentic relationships within smaller affinity spaces has been instrumental to growth, progress, and feelings of safety. Many have decided to focus their energy within these spaces instead of being a part of the MAR-AMTA. Additionally, many non-members and members reported engaging with other organizations who have demonstrated anti-oppressive action. Authentically engaging with other organizations may be key for the MAR-AMTA to learn new ways of operating, as well as new ways of being with stakeholders.

Continued training for members of the MAR EB may be helpful in mitigating the fear that many EB members feel, especially fear of harm that immobilizes members from acting to adjust oppressive structures. Continuous engagement with communities outside of those who hold power (AMTA EB, MAR EB, and committees) will also be important for the MAR EB.

One Right Way

The category of "One Right Way" is defined as "The belief there is one right way to do things. Connected to the belief in an objective "perfect" that is both attainable and desirable for everyone. Connected to the belief that I am qualified to know what the perfect right way is for myself and others." This category includes the sub-categories of paternalism, perfectionism, objectivity, and qualified.

Paternalism

Paternalism is defined as "an action that limits a person's or group's liberty or autonomy and is intended to promote their own good. Paternalism can also imply that the behavior is against or regardless of the will of a person, or also that the behavior expresses an attitude of superiority; those who hold power control decision-making and define things (standards, perfection, one way)."

How it Manifests. Interviewees discussed how issues of accessibility, communication, and transparency prevent members and non-members from being able to make significant changes that might benefit marginalized members and their clients. Many noted that most committee decisions, such as bylaws and other changes, are made without consulting music therapists in the region. Members and non-members must accept that only those chosen to serve on committees can make changes in regards to MAR-AMTA. In addition, marginalized members reported that they feel their intersectional identities and lived experiences are ignored by the Executive Board of the MAR-AMTA, as well as within the AMTA. These lived experiences are often only ‘heard’ when a more privileged person, such as a cis het white male in an academic position, parrots what a marginalized person has communicated. Many also noted that committees present work to either the MAR EB or AMTA EB and recommendations are ignored, as those in power on the Executive Boards override committee research, work, and recommendations. Interviewees note that those who serve in the highest positions hold all of the power for change, as well as define how this change can occur. Interviewees also noted that the power in the MAR EB is defined within a hierarchy, although most people within power denied their own power within the hierarchy. Many interviewees specifically named being uncomfortable with the hierarchical structure of the MAR EB, including within the EB, between committees and the EB, between members and EB, and between non-members and members. Finally, many interviewees believed that their experiences and journeys represented the norm.

Consequences. Many interviewees stated that they were uninterested in serving or even being involved with the MAR EB because of the rigid hierarchy and decision-making processes. Several noted leaving the organization or even the field due to harm endured as a result of these processes. Interviewees were also hesitant or fearful to criticize those perceived to hold power. Many who have served on committees or the EB feel exhausted from the lack of progress; many named wanting to quit because nothing gets done and people perceived as having less power aren’t heard.

Other Options. Board members can work on developing the ability to notice defensiveness in action, especially in regards to believing one way is the right way, or that the way things have always been done is the only way to do things. Board members can allow space to consider different paths that may be less harmful or increase equity. Trainings and continued engagement with educational resources may help board members begin to understand that their experiences are not *everyone’s* experiences. Clarity is needed around how the EB positions, committees, and members/non-members fall within the hierarchy of decision-making. Finally, EB and committee members should work to avoid making decisions for individuals who are not present, and should support stakeholders at all levels of power, as opposed to favoring those higher within the hierarchy.

Perfectionism

Perfectionism is defined as “the conditioned belief and attitude that we can determine whether others are showing up as perfect and demand or expect that they do so. White supremacy culture uses perfectionism to preserve power and the status quo.”

How it Manifests. Many interviewees noted how long it takes for the MAR EB to make decisions, particularly when marginalized members and non-members bring requests forward. They noted how the MAR EB focuses on utilizing perfect language and procedure, and in doing so, miss ample opportunity to support communities within the region. The interviewees noted how things must be ‘perfect’ and follow procedure when issues of equity and diversity arise, but that this commitment to perfection is not always present with other issues. This focus on perfection was noted by several interviewees as being used as a weapon against change and progress.

Many interviewees noted a fear of not performing perfectly in board positions. Many noted the incongruence in serving within a volunteer position and upholding expectations of perfection. This expectation is both implicit and unspoken, as well as maintained by expectations communicated by membership via emails and social media posts. The culture of perfectionism is evident not only on the MAR EB, but within the region itself, as members expect a Euro-centric perfection from all board members.

Consequences. Perfectionism can create rigidity, feed into fear, and cause immobilization. Mistakes or imperfect progress are weaponized, which slows progress further. Those who are perceived to be closer to perfect, by white organizational standards, inherently hold more power. Those with executive dysfunction or other disabilities are oppressed when perfectionism is held as an implicit standard. People who volunteer their time to serve are at risk of experiencing a variety of mental health symptoms as a result of not attaining the standard of perfection. Additionally, working relationships are bound to be strained when perfection is not met.

Other Options. The EB may learn to call each other in when they notice colleagues adhering to an implied perfectionism standard; perfectionism should be named. The EB can offer grace and appreciation for work and efforts. A transformation towards becoming a learning community is needed, where the expectation is that mistakes will be made and mistakes are opportunities for growth. Creating a culture of inquiry so that we may together examine ‘mistakes’ and the supposed ‘right way.’ The EB can solicit and integrate feedback from stakeholders to learn how to do better moving forward. Members can work on accepting decisions made as a group, even if it wasn’t one particular individual’s preferred method of moving forward.

Objectivity

Objectivity is defined as “the belief that there is such a thing as being objective or ‘neutral;’ the belief that emotions are inherently destructive, irrational, and should not play a role in decision-making or group process.”

How it Manifests. Interviewees noted that many board members weaponize ‘rational’ or ‘logical’ structures, such as Robert’s Rules of Order or policy/procedure, to maintain power and sway decision-making processes. Many interviewees also noted that to be taken seriously, they must speak in a specific professional, neutral, and objective manner - interviewees also noted the lengths taken to avoid being considered ‘hysterical,’ ‘aggressive,’ or ‘emotional,’ as they knew it would be held against them when decisions were made. Marginalized interviewees who have been harmed by oppressive acts and structures of the MAR-AMTA noted that they were not allowed to express their hurt or anger without retaliation, while it is common for ciswhite women to express emotion without consequence.

Consequences. Marginalized members and non-members must code-switch to be taken seriously by a historically white board. Lived and contextualized experiences are understood as secondary when compared to parliamentary procedures and other supposed objective sources of knowledge. Emotional experiences are wrapped in logical and professional language and weaponized to maintain the status quo and interrupt change processes. These acts perpetuate white Euro-centric professionalism and language and procedure, leaving little room for non-white, abled, and highly educated ways of being, thinking, and knowing.

Other Options. The EB needs to begin to recognize that members can’t possibly understand all communities’ ways of thinking, being, and knowing, and that a ‘rational’ way of knowing is just one way of being. The EB can work on naming when members are falling into the trap of objectivity and utilizing rational, logical, or objective language to maintain a status quo. The EB can begin to model acceptance of emotional ways of knowing by naming harm, anger, and other emotional experiences.

Qualified

This is defined by “middle and owning class white people, formally educated, who are taught by the culture that they are qualified and even duty bound to fix, save, and set straight the world;” the idea that who is in charge is qualified to make decisions for entire groups of people.

How it Manifests. Interviewees almost unanimously discussed being asked to run or being appointed for their position because they knew someone already in power. Most interviewees also noted that those in power already hold power, whether through publications, academic positions, already having served for an extended amount of time, or by existing in the ‘right’ circle of people. Interviewees noted that the EB cycles through the same core people, as there is an assumption that if you have served before, you are qualified to continue doing so. Additionally, several interviewees noted the preference of higher degrees to Bachelor’s trained

music therapists. The MAR-AMTA and AMTA uphold hierarchical power structures, where those in higher positions are deemed to be better qualified to make decisions, and do so without consulting literature or stakeholders. Thus, a very small number of people make decisions for hundreds to thousands of music therapists. Several interviewees noted that while the MAR-EB claims to be ‘progressive,’ we uphold hierarchical power dynamics - this strengthens the myth of qualification as a method for decision making processes and maintains the ‘unqualified’ as those who do not serve on the EB or in committees. Many interviewees considered knowledge about specific positions or procedures/bylaws to be indicative of qualification, yet most of those who have served did not come into their positions with knowledge of the positions. Formalized knowledge is considered more valuable than lived and contextualized experiences.

Consequences. Working with inner circles in this way decreases inclusive and equitable practices, especially when it comes to the MAR EB being representative of multiple lived experiences. Valuing assumed qualifications, which favors those who sit in multiple privileged identities, leaves out potential candidates and ignores feedback from those who have racialized and otherwise marginalized experiences. Assumptions and preferences of assumed qualification inherently prioritize the highly educated (who ‘know’ the best/most), abled (who ‘think’ the best), well-resourced (will get things done in a ‘timely’ manner), and are the most well-connected (to white privileged circles). In addition, this leads to gatekeeping within the organization, which can, and does, lead to nepotism.

Other Options. Marginalized members interviewed often discussed going outside of the hierarchies when seeking input about their positions. Mainly, seeking input from the community. Many interviewees also noted struggling with maintaining the hierarchy; many noted that they did not want to perpetuate the hierarchical structures by reaching ‘upward’ in the hierarchy for answers. Instead, reaching ‘downward’ or ‘laterally’ is an alternative, where members of the EB reach out to others in similar positions or to members and non-members for input. EB members can begin to name when colleagues are speaking in terms of assumed and Eurocentric ‘qualifications,’ as well as begin to overtly value lived experience as a form of knowledge and qualification.

Either/Or and Binary Thinking

The category of “either/or and binary thinking” is defined as that which “reduces the complexity of life and the nuance of our relationships with each other and all living things into either/or, yes or no, right or wrong in ways that reinforce urgency, one right way perfectionist thinking, and abuse of power.”

How It Manifests

Binary thinking is apparent in beliefs such as “anyone who wants to serve can serve” or “if I can do it, you can do it.” Binary thinking diminishes the complexity of lived experiences,

especially those outside of cis/het, white, abled, middle-class experiences. Binary thinking also increases a sense of urgency as EB members may feel that they have to do “this” or “that” (non-anonymized voting or anonymized voting), examining the complexity of situations and finding alternative routes. This also falls into thinking that there is a “right” and a “wrong,” such as “this one understanding of the bylaws is the only way.”

Consequences

Either/or and binary thinking devalues alternative and creative solutions to problems, which require time and other resources. Often, either/or thinking can pit marginalized communities against each other, because it ignores intersectionality and other complexities.

Other Ways

The MAR-EB can begin to name when colleagues are engaging in either/or and binary thinking, including when someone has stated a definitive “this is right and this other thing is wrong.” In doing so, the EB can prioritize time and resources necessary for alternative and creative solutions, which will also make time for examining anti-oppressive solutions. The MAR-EB can also work to avoid assigning one single cause to problems or challenges, such as “this is your fault.” Instead, the MAR EB can begin to acknowledge the ways in which oppressions intersect and reinforce each other as well as the ways in which oppression can be operating at the interpersonal, institutional and cultural levels.

Denial and Defensiveness

The category of “Denial and Defensiveness” is defined as: “The habit of denying and defending against the ways in which white supremacy and racism are produced and our individual or collective participation in that production.” Those in power experience criticism as threatening, abuse, or rude/inappropriate.

How It Manifests

Many interviewees named the aspirational goal equivalent to “all voices matter,” which inherently embraces identity erasure and denies the lived experiences of oppression that marginalized music therapists endure. Denial is evident in both the denial of the importance of identity (“I don’t see color,” “It doesn’t matter what your identity is”) and the denial of harm perpetrated against marginalized music therapists and clients by the MAR-EB. Defensiveness shows up in causing a lot of barriers for new ideas, especially when those new ideas are in regards to DEI topics (such as anonymized voting and DEI questions on conference proposals), which makes progress nearly impossible. Defensiveness also can manifest as weaponizing being upset about being called in regarding topics of oppression or hanging onto old ways of doing things, because doing something else implies that the old way wasn’t good (either/or thinking). Marginalized interviewees noted significant emotional labor needed to navigate MAR-EB

defensiveness. Many interviewees noted that their concerns aren't taken seriously, or are met with such statements as "Well we are trying."

Consequences

Without acknowledgement of identity and oppression, the MAR-EB can't address oppressive actions and structures. Additionally, denial and defensiveness protects old ways of operating because it becomes increasingly difficult for people to name oppressive actions as they happen, because time must be spent navigating the defensive emotions and behaviors. Marginalized members have reported several times not feeling safe and not trusting the actions of the MAR-EB.

Other Ways

MAR-EB members can begin by calling each other in when denial or defensiveness becomes apparent within communication or meetings. The fear that propels defensiveness can be named and addressed. Individual members of the EB can begin to notice and work on their own defensive feelings around change and progress; this individual work should be prioritized and can be supported through educational resources and DEI trainings/support groups. The MAR-EB can begin to discuss when defensiveness impedes progress and change, and brainstorm ways to move forward when denial and defensiveness become apparent within the space. The MAR-EB may also recognize that those who hold more power are more likely to experience defensiveness, and thus, have a greater responsibility to process these feelings. Additionally, the MAR-EB can give themselves grace and let go of the need to take it personally when criticism about oppressive practice is illuminated.

Right to Comfort and Fear of (Open) Conflict

The category of "Right to Comfort and Fear of (Open) Conflict" is defined as "The internalization that I or we have a right to comfort, which means we cannot tolerate conflict, particularly open conflict. This assumption supports the tendency to blame the person or group causing discomfort or conflict rather than addressing the issues being named." This category includes the sub-category of power hoarding.

How It Manifests

Many interviewees noted feeling uncomfortable discussing topics of identity and marginalization. Many stated that the topic, while important, was difficult to discuss. Many interviewees demonstrated and expressed feelings of discomfort in being unable to respond to specific questions. At times this came before answering the question, but at times this also came after they responded to the question. Specific questions that seemed more challenging included those related to identity and accessibility. Many acknowledged this discomfort after identifying that more can be done to promote decentralizing dominance within the executive board. Interviewees stated that they would be willing to make changes and expressed a desire for time

to learn what others need as well as time to adapt or stated that the board has already made adaptations to rectify the situation.

Right to comfort is also apparent in the misinterpretation of discomfort as harm (a good example of this misinterpretation is the recent email sent to MAR from AMTA, where white discomfort is perceived as a larger problem than the active harm against marginalized music therapists). This also can manifest as privileged members being offended when being asked to change or claiming that they are being oppressed. Fear of Open Conflict can manifest in requiring ‘professional’ ways of communicating, which can bar criticism. There is an emphasis on being ‘polite,’ or telling people to ‘calm down’ when expressing differing opinions, especially when related to DEI topics.

Consequences

While being willing to sit in discomfort and engage in these questions demonstrates a willingness to engage in this discussion, consequences of asking for time to adapt can be understood as oppressive. Providing time for the EB and privileged members of MAR to adjust to change and ‘be comfortable’ is harmful to marginalized music therapists, especially if the EB highlights changes that have already been made as being ‘good enough’. Focusing on the comfort of those in power prevents the board from addressing actual oppressive actions and structures. Without any progressive action on these aspirational ideas, words are simply performative and perpetuate harm.

Other Ways

The MAR-EB can begin to name when colleagues are acting out of fear of conflict or discomfort. The EB can begin to move from the idea phase into the somatic and action phase of sitting in discomfort through discussion and change. The EB can begin to engage in executive session meeting formats to challenge biases and assumptions. The MAR-EB should encourage and prioritize continued training, especially regarding how to address and utilize conflict toward relationship building, increased insight, and actionable change.

Power Hoarding

This is defined by “Those with power feel threatened when anyone suggests changes in how things should be done in the organization, often feeling suggestions for change are a reflection on their leadership; those with power assume they have the best interests of the organization at heart and assume those wanting change are ill-informed (stupid), emotional, inexperienced; blaming the messenger rather than focusing on the message.”

How it Manifests. Many interviewees noted that knowledge about governing documents, policies, and procedures are only accessible to a chosen few. The system appears designed to keep power in the hands of a few who have access to certain knowledge. In addition,

interviewees noted that they often witness similar members serving on multiple committees and positions of power, with their voices prioritized.

Consequences. Many people reported a lack of communication about what is expected for their positions, leading to feeling confused and disempowered. Change is often slowed or halted because of parliamentary procedures, which many members feel are used as a way to stifle progress. Many interviewees noted that harm can come when people focus too much on parliamentary procedure when dealing with topics that impact marginalized members and non-members. Additionally, almost all interviewees noted that there need to be term limits for all positions, as well as limits on how long one person can serve consecutively ('bounce around' positions).

Other Options. The MAR-EB can begin to explore alternative models of governance that are both more accessible and not rooted in white supremacy ideals, such as consensus model. The expiration of term limits could also address that the same voices hold power in the region for extended periods of time. The MAR-EB can also begin to prioritize community knowledge and sharing power.

Individualism

The category "Individualism" is defined as: "Our cultural story that we make it on our own, without help, while pulling ourselves up by our own bootstraps, is a toxic denial of our essential interdependence and the reality that we are all in this, literally, together." This category includes the sub-category of 'I'm the Only One.'

How It Manifests

Many interviewees stated that they felt disconnected from the regional and national organizations when seeking help or understanding on region-related topics. Needs were related to interviewees' EB position role and responsibilities; for those outside of the executive board, needs were related to the organization. Individualism is also demonstrated through the denial of how some people in the right circles were perceived as groomed for certain positions, which belies or minimizes the interdependence that already is in place. Most interviewees noted that serving on the board is a privileged endeavor that requires significant individual resources. Additionally, many interviewees noted that some positions on the EB must do 'all the work,' and that there is little support from smaller communities or other members of the EB for tasks.

Consequences

Shouldering the responsibility of gaining and providing individual resources to serve may prevent people from engaging with the EB. Without the recognition of our interdependence, a select few may begin to resent those who do not donate or give all they can to the organization, and thus, devalue the voices of those who do not offer all their resources to the organization.

With this division, a lack of community is perceived by those outside and within the organization causing further division. Members of the EB risk feeling a sense of martyrdom as well, where they feel that they are owed power or other aspects of social capital because of the sacrifices made to serve. Individualism creates a hyperfocus on the individual experiences of the majority of voices (cis het white women) and erases/denies the lived experiences of other music therapists in the region.

Other Ways

The Mar EB may begin by adjusting focus outward to the community and begin to seek information about how our privileged intersectional identities influence our work. The EB can also begin to name teamwork and collaboration as important processes to the functioning of the board, instead of isolating responsibilities to individuals. This could be addressed by creating more equitable power-sharing in additional co-chair positions for larger work loads/committees. The MAR EB can also continue to acknowledge work completed by all members of committees, and not just the leaders or chaired representatives. The MAR EB leaders, such as committee chairs and voting members, can begin to prioritize delegating tasks and community problem-solving. We can begin to prioritize self-care and recognize that EB members do not need to operate alone or deplete internal/external resources.

I'm the Only One

This is defined as “The belief that if something is going to get done “right,” ‘I’ have to do it, because I am qualified and entitled to do so.”

How It Manifests. Interviewees identified that one way this manifests is that certain positions on the EB are perceived to be the ones who have ‘right answer,’ due to the specific position, or perceived qualifications (also sub-category: Qualified). Interviewees identified that although nothing explicitly states such hierarchical power, some positions are implicitly held in higher esteem or value on the board, which centralizes power to specific people. This was also identified as manifesting through people remaining in positions for extended periods of time, thus making themselves the ‘expert’ on the role or topic. Many interviewees also noted great reflexivity related to this topic and were able to note how difficult it is to delegate - many interviewees noted just ‘wanting to get things done,’ which can lead to individualizing the work and taking on unfair burdens.

Consequences. “I’m the Only One” can cause tasks or jobs to become inaccessible to those with less power, because they are not asked or allowed to contribute. This singularity contributes to a select few making decisions for many, with limited ability to diversify understanding and knowledge on the topic, or during decision making. This can perpetuate the cycle of not engaging with historically marginalized experiences and voices; it can also

contribute to martyrdom, feelings of isolation, and burn-out for the MAR EB member engaging in the “I’m the only one” thinking.

Other Ways. The MAR EB may begin to realize that leadership is dynamic and does not rest in one individual. The MAR EB may also begin to call each other in when noticing colleagues engaging in Individualism or “I’m the Only One” thinking. We may begin to recognize that each of us can lead at different times in different circumstances, and may be called upon to follow or take a back seat when we are learning or making room for new leadership to emerge. The MAR EB can begin to prioritize sharing knowledge and expanding the responsibilities to more than one person.

Progress is More and Quantity over Quality

The category “Progress is More and Quantity Over Quality” is defined as “The assumption that the goal is always more and bigger with an emphasis on what we can ‘objectively’ measure as more valuable than the quality of our relationships to all living beings.”

How it Manifests

Interviewees noted the MAR EB’s apparent obsession with numbers, especially for membership. Many felt that the MAR EB and AMTA care about large membership numbers, but not the quality of service provided to members, especially marginalized groups whose numbers are fewer than the cishet white music therapists. In a battle of numbers, marginalized groups will inherently always lose. Interviewees also noted valuing numbers (the newsletter, how many people run for office, how many people voted), with little value placed on the lived experience of these interactions. Additionally, many interviewees held MAR EB in comparison to other regions, who have not ‘progressed’ in anti-oppressive work as the MAR is perceived to have. This perpetuates the competition of progress vs those who ‘have not,’ instead of focusing on next steps and humility.

Consequences

Engaging in Progress is More and Quantity of Quality may result in feelings of increased competition both within the MAR EB and between MAR and other regions. This can also reduce the lived experiences of music therapists to numbers, which often denies and erases harm caused by the region. It can also result in believing that if it can’t be measured, it isn’t important, which inherently denies the emotional experiences of marginalized people whose experiences *don’t* get measured. It may also result in all-consuming efforts to meet quantitative goals (such as a certain number of people voting, etc).

Other Ways

The MAR EB may begin by calling in colleagues who fall into using Progress is More and Quantity over Quality thinking. We may begin to emphasize the value of feedback forms and

engaging members in avenues such as town hall meetings. The MAR EB may begin to redirect the focus to interpersonal and community-based success. Cost/benefit analyses should consider not just financial cost, but moral and other costs, such as cost to relationship and other music therapists. The MAR EB may begin to become more flexible so that we can go off the ‘planned agenda’ to address people’s underlying needs, with the knowledge that this will create more equity in the long term.

Worship of Written Word

The category of “Worship of Written Word” is defined as “Honoring only what is written and even then only what is written to a narrow standard, even when what is written is full of misinformation and lies. An erasure of the wide range of ways we communicate with each other and all living things.”

How it Manifests

Interviewees identified that the rigid value placed on the Constitution & Bylaws and procedural documents, and those individuals who have a historic and working knowledge of these. Interestingly, while people referenced these written documents and this knowledge as a perceived value, limited people identified that they actually attend to/read these to find answers to questions. It was stated that while this written word is valued, it remains inaccessible to many due to language utilized within the documents; this inherently provides higher value to those people who have knowledge of and can explain these written documents without assistance. Many interviewees noted that the worship of the written documents are weaponized against progress and change - there is an assumption that only a handful of people can understand the documents, and thus, nobody else can interpret these documents. When asked about barriers to progress, the MAR EB’s rigidity regarding written documents came up the most.

Consequences

Those with a historical or working knowledge of these documents are perceived to have a stronger voice and yield higher value within the organization. This perception limits those who are not well-versed in these documents and cause feelings of inadequacy around interactions with the board. Specifically, for those observing, there is fear of not following along. For those interested in engaging, uncertainty exists around speaking up at meetings during the ‘incorrect’ times, or saying things in the inappropriate order/format. Several interviewees noted that unwarranted offers of being ‘taught’ procedural knowledge are condescending and only act to perpetuate power dynamics. Many interviewees noted that they were not comfortable running for the board because they don’t understand the documents, can’t find the documents, and don’t have the resource of time to spend learning the documents as well as the expectations of the position. Many noted a fear that those who know more about the documents will hold power over them. Additionally, lived experience and human need are prioritized below these written documents and procedures. This actively limits stakeholder’s interest in the organization. Interviewees also

noted that these documents are actively invoked to resist change (through procedural and governance barriers). This resistance is particularly evident in the inaccessible language of the written documents, and thus, the language utilized to discuss these documents.

Other Ways

The MAR EB may begin by creating a plain language document of the bylaws & constitution, as well as procedural documents. These documents should be made easily accessible. Additionally, the MAR EB needs to move towards an understanding that the documents need to be definitive enough to guide but flexible enough to allow for change and progress as needed, and should demonstrate the value of lived experience. The MAR EB may also begin to prioritize other ways of knowing that are not limited to written documentation, including spoken and aesthetic (musical) engagement.

Sense of Urgency

The category of “Sense of Urgency” is defined as “Our cultural habit of applying a sense of urgency to our every-day lives in ways that perpetuate power imbalance while disconnecting us from our need to breathe and pause and reflect. Applying the urgency of racial and social justice to our everyday lives can perpetuate power imbalance.”

How it Manifests

It was reported that while there are topics that are given time and attention, such as wordsmithing and attending to policy and procedure, many sensitive topics are not open for sharing lived experiences or reflecting on what is happening within the organization and the region. Many interviewees noted that timeliness and meeting deadlines was highly valued in serving on the MAR EB, but many also noted many decisions are rushed without consulting those who the decisions affect. Additionally, many interviewees noted that deadlines were rigid, which left no room for personal barriers.

Consequences

In the process of getting through the business of the organization, it is felt as though only those with urgency for the appropriate tasks can share, limiting their voice and identity. This manifests two-fold: People not believing that they are able to respond with the urgency that is being required for deadlines, yet witnessing the organization business come to a standstill while taking time for other procedural fanfare. A sense of urgency inherently privileges those who process information quickly.

Other Ways

The MAR EB may begin by calling each other in when they notice colleagues engaging in a sense of urgency that may harm or manipulate the decision making process. This should not be confused with “Right to Comfort,” which forces marginalized people to wait while white

people grow comfortable to the idea of change. Many committee chairs noted allowing more space and time for decision making, as well as delegating tasks so that time spent on tasks is spread out between members. Additionally, different organizational procedures may allow more space for reflection. The EB may also begin to identify which goals should be classified as urgent or which should not. This subject is particularly tricky, as waiting too long can harm marginalized people, while acting with a sense of urgency can also cause harm. For a better understanding of this particular theme, we recommend using this resource:

<http://www.whitesupremacyculture.info/urgency.html>

Recommendations & Considerations

Extension of Anti-Oppressive Ad-Hoc:

We are formally requesting the extension of the work of the Anti-Oppressive Ad-Hoc with new members, as CJ Shiloh and Michael Viega are leaving the MAR-AMTA Executive Board. Two MAR members who represent multiple intersections of marginalization have reached out and requested to serve on the ad-hoc; we would like to open the ad-hoc to them. Additionally, we would like to invite at least two more members of the new board to serve on the ad-hoc.

The next iteration of the ad-hoc should focus on the analysis provided by this ad-hoc and work towards offering action items to the board and membership, to be voted upon. This ad-hoc would be a research-focused ad-hoc; their job would be to continue exploring anti-oppressive practices and provide beginning steps for change. Requests for the next ad-hoc are highlighted.

Initial Recommendations:

This ad-hoc's initial recommendations for the Executive Board are as follows:

1. Accessibility:

- a. **Increased accessibility for all EB processes and communication:** MAR EB processes, including meetings, conferences, the website, email correspondence, voting, and decision-making, need to be more accessible. The current MAR EB processes are reactionary in nature, where we wait until disabled music therapists tell us what they need. This requires disabled individuals to out themselves, as well as engage in emotional labor to educate us about accessibility. We need to move towards creating and prioritizing accessible spaces. Accessibility should not be an afterthought.
- b. **Research equitable language practices:** Currently the MAR EB privileges the spoken English language in all documents, communication, and meetings. This makes it difficult for those whose primary language is not English to participate in proceedings. **We request that the next ad-hoc research equitable language practices and present findings to the MAR EB.**

2. Bylaws and Procedures:

- a. **Increased accessibility of Bylaws and Procedural documents:** It is extremely difficult for EB members, MAR members, and non-members to access our bylaws and procedural documents. They are not easily accessible via the website or google. This makes it extremely difficult for those other than a select few to have opinions about how the MAR EB conducts itself. Bylaws and procedural documents should be easily accessible to all who are interested. Additionally, a

plain language document should be written for the entire Constitution and Bylaws, as well as all procedural documents.

- b. **Examination of Bylaws and procedures through DEI lens:** The Bylaws and procedural documents have not been subjected to an examination through the lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion. **We request that the next ad-hoc partner with the bylaws revision committee in examining the bylaws and procedural documents through a DEI lens.**
- c. **Research equitable governance procedures and alternatives to Robert's Rules of Order:** There is no law that requires non-profits to utilize Robert's Rules of Order as governance procedure, and it is well-established that Robert's Rules of Order uphold white supremacy culture. Alternatives to Robert's Rules should be researched, as well as how to move forward with changes to procedure. **We request that the next ad-hoc research alternatives to Robert's Rules of Order and how to proceed with making changes to parliamentary procedures.**

3. Committees:

- a. **Increase communication and bi-directional relationship with all committees:** Currently, the MAR-EB upholds unequal power dynamics by requesting labor from committees without taking recommendations from the committees. Additionally, committees operate in isolation and the EB generally does not know what occurs in many committees except for annual reports. To ensure a sense of community, as well as the extension of anti-oppressive practices to committees of the MAR-EB, communication should be increased.
- b. **Establishment/appointment of co-chairs for larger committees:** MAR-EB members are volunteers. Volunteering a large number of hours in the name of service upholds white supremacy ideals (working for free to gain social capital). This ad-hoc recognizes that it would not be feasible to pay EB members for their service. Instead, the MAR-EB needs to work to make positions more equitable and even out the workload. Many chair positions are required to conduct an exorbitant amount of free labor. We have witnessed steps toward equitable division of labor with the creation of elect positions (VP of CP; GR). **We request that the next ad-hoc examine the size and workload of committees and make recommendations as to which committees should require co-chair positions.**
- c. **Examination of charges for committees, assembly, state task forces, and other related bodies through DEI lens:** As the MAR-EB moves forward with anti-oppressive practices, an examination of all elements of the MAR-EB is warranted. All charges should be examined through a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens by MAR-EB members. For example, the GR Chair will examine the charges of the state task forces. Language should be written to protect and guide those who serve the MAR-EB in the event of a DEI-related issue.

4. Communication:

- a. **Establishment of better documentation protocols:** Currently, new MAR-EB members face unclear expectations of their roles and are dependent on those who came before them. Documents should be created that detail each position's expected duties and responsibilities (including timeframes, who to communicate with, etc.), what has been achieved during each person's service, and needs for the upcoming term. This will create more equitable power distribution as knowledge about recent procedures and how positions function will be readily available. These documents should be available to members and non-members alike.
- b. **Increase communication with music therapists in the region:** Membership participation and elections/bylaws votes do not represent the population of music therapists who live in the region. Currently the MAR EB does not represent the music therapists in the region; instead it represents 30-50 people who have the time and resources to participate in MAR proceedings. In an effort to become more equitable and inclusive, MAR should work to increase communication with all music therapists, not just paying members.

5. Executive Board Positions:

- a. **Provide DEI trainings for all EB members, including non-voting and committee chairs:** It became apparent through interviews that those serving the MAR EB exist at varying stages of development in anti-oppressive work. Because the MAR EB represents and serves a diverse group of people, including both professionals and clients, training should be a priority for all members. To represent this priority, resources should be allocated for such trainings.
- b. **Establishment of term limits for all positions:** Equitable representation can be increased by establishing term limits for all positions on the Executive Board. We request that the next ad-hoc research comparable term limits within other organizations, especially those who are actively anti-oppressive, and make recommendations regarding term limits to the EB. We also request that the ad-hoc research the feasibility of term limits for committee chairs.
- c. **Establish a limit to how many years/positions in a row someone may serve:** Similarly, there is no limit to how long someone can serve on the board. This means that some EB members (such as one member of this ad-hoc who served for 13 years) hold power for extended periods of time, which limits representation of diverse voices and experiences. We request the next ad-hoc research comparable limits within other organizations and make recommendations regarding consecutive service limits to the EB.
- d. **Creation of equitable expectations for EB members:** Expectations for conduct during meetings and through communication, such as email correspondence, will be helpful support to EB members as they continue their own path towards

anti-oppressive awareness and practice. These expectations may include items such as being encouraged to call each other in on topics regarding oppression, providing grace to mistakes, etc. We request the next ad-hoc research similar expectations in anti-oppressive organizations, and create the first iteration of these expectations for EB members, with the understanding that these expectations will not become a fixed and rigid document, but will instead represent the fluidity of changing understandings of anti-oppressive work, language, and practices.

6. Professional Audit

While it is common for organizations to undergo internal audits, these audits are usually in preparation for external audits. It is this ad-hoc's recommendation that the MAR EB revisit the audit proposal for developing a DEI lens by unlock NGenuity, now The Junkin Group, and begin to allocate resources for this audit.

[Audit proposal](#)

Appendix A: Interview Questions

Sourced from: Anti-Oppressive Resource and Training Alliance (AORTA):

https://aorta.coop/portfolio_page/infiltration-how-the-values-of-systems-of-oppression-tend-to-arise-in-co-ops/?fbclid=IwAR2a8LRRib2u8eo_OIP-f2P87U-zOpsMdy6mBJdvO4vlyahSZGQSIJ9CZoQ

1. How did you become the chair of the committee? (If on board) How did you come to be on the board? What prompted you to be willing to serve in this capacity? What was your journey to becoming the chair of the committee?

How do you perceive that other board members came to be in their position? (How did the leaders of the organization get there?)

2. What barriers do you perceive to participation in (your MAR committee/MAR)? What barriers have you personally experienced? Have you noticed any progress around those barriers?
3. Who (or what resources) do you go to/ refer to in order to get questions answered in relation to your committee problems? Who do the members of your committee go to when they have questions?
4. In your committee, whose opinions and voices matter most?

In your opinion, who holds the power on the executive board/MAR? Whose opinions and voices matter most on the executive board/in MAR?

5. On your committee, what kinds of knowledge and skills are valued? Which are not valued?

In your opinion, on the executive board/in MAR, what kinds of knowledge and skills are valued? Which are not valued?

6. What is the impact/influence of sexuality, gender, and gender identity on your committee? Race? Disability? Age?

What is the impact/influence of sexuality, gender, and gender identity on the MAR EB? Race? Disability? Age?

7. Are there people who speak English as a second language in your committee? Are there any structures that exist for interpretation and translation to meet their needs?

Are there people who speak English as a second language on the EB? Are there any structures that exist for interpretation and translation to meet their needs?

8. Are there people who need disability-related accommodations in order to serve on your committee? Are there any structures that exist to meet the accommodations? Does your committee engage with individuals who have disability-related accommodation needs, and how does your committee meet these needs?

Are there people who need disability-related accommodations in order to serve on the EB? Are there any structures that exist to meet the accommodations? Does the EB engage with individuals who have disability-related accommodation needs, and how does the EB meet these needs?

9. In your opinion, is your committee willing to make changes to become more inclusive to marginalized members?

In your opinion, is the EB willing to make changes to become more inclusive to marginalized members?

10. Do you have anything else you would like to talk about or bring to the ad-hocs attention, in terms of harm, oppression, or privilege as it relates to the committee or MAR EB?

Appendix B: Email Correspondence

Email 1: Stephenie Sofield, 10/22/20

All,

I am emailing in reference to the Anti-Oppression Accountability Ad-Hoc's charge and purpose. The ad-hoc's charge is:

Review and examine the oppressive structures that perpetuate harm to historically and systematically marginalized stakeholders of the region, explore alternative organizational structures, and present initial findings to the board.

Our first step will be to interview all chairs of committees as it relates to this charge, and thus, our purpose.

If you could reply to this email and let me know what your general availability is (days and times), we will work to get an interview scheduled with one of the four ad-hoc committee members.

Thank you in advance for your time!

Stephenie

Email 2: Follow-Up Email Template, Ad-Hoc Member Assigned to Interviewee, Date As Needed,

Hi _____.

I hope you are well. I am writing to follow up with you to set up a date for the Zoom meeting/ interview for the Anti-Oppressive Practice Ad Hoc Committee with me.

I am sure that Stephenie emailed you, but if you have more questions, just let me know. We have your availability as _____. If that is still the case, would you be able to meet _____? Attached is a copy of the questions that we are asking.

We have split up the interviews/meetings to take the burden of any one member of the committee. So, because of that, we are also asking if the Zoom meeting can be recorded (just for the committee purposes) so that we accurately remember all the conversation for data collection purposes, and so we don't put words in other people's mouths.

Hope to hear from you soon!

Best,

Appendix D: Social Media Posts

Post 1: Stephenie Sofield, 10/19/2020, Facebook

The MAR Executive Board created the Anti-Oppressive Accountability Ad-Hoc on October 4th, 2020.

The official charge is “Review and examine the oppressive structures that perpetuate harm to historically and systemically marginalized stakeholders of the region, explore alternative organizational structures, and present initial findings to the board.”

We will be examining the ways that the Executive Board operates which perpetuate harm to BIPOC, LGBTQIA2+, and disabled stakeholders; exploring new ways of doing things; and presenting what we find to the MAR Executive Board during the Spring meeting. In recognizing that the current executive board is entirely white passing, and historically so, this ad-hoc is actively working to mitigate harmful practices and structures within the MAR Executive Board. This represents the initial phase of a much longer process toward becoming an anti-oppressive organization.

This ad-hoc committee will be meeting with and interviewing all heads of MAR committees to inquire about potential harmful practices and policies. In preparation for these meetings, the ad-hoc committee members will be performing a critical review of the MAR constitution and by-laws. In noting that we have implicit bias as all white members of the ad-hoc committee, we will be inviting consultant review of our findings.

To that end, this ad-hoc would like to consult anyone who has experienced barriers in dealing with the MAR Executive Board, whether having served or interacted with the Executive Board in any capacity. While this committee will be offering findings to consultants and the MAR executive board, your involvement can be anonymously offered. If you are interested in volunteering your time as a consultant, please reach out to either of the co-chairs:

CJ Shiloh: governmentrelations@maramta.org

Stephenie Sofield: governmentrelationsselect@maramta.org

Consultants will be interviewed about their experiences and/or will review findings of the ad-hoc.

Signed,

CJ Shiloh, MAR Government Relations Chair, Co-Chair of the Anti-Oppression Accountability Ad-Hoc Committee

Stephenie Sofield, MAR Government Relations-Chair Elect, Co-Chair of the Anti-Oppression Accountability Ad-Hoc Committee

Lauren Stoner, MAR Secretary, Committee Member

Michael Viega, MAR Past-President, Committee Member

Post 2: Dee Kelliher, 1/25/21, Facebook

If you are interested in being interviewed by the Anti-Oppressive Accountability Ad-Hoc Committee, please contact Stephenie Sofield or CJ Shiloh (email is at the end of this announcement). The deadline for completing interviews is March 1st, 2021.

This ad-hoc would like to consult anyone who has experienced barriers in regard to the working of the MAR Executive Board and regional structures, whether having served or interacted with the Executive Board in any capacity. While this committee will be offering findings to consultants and the MAR executive board, your involvement can be anonymously offered. Consultants will be interviewed about their experiences and/or will review findings of the ad-hoc.

Information about the ad-hoc and its charge are as follows:

The MAR Executive Board created the Anti-Oppressive Accountability Ad-Hoc on October 4th, 2020. The official charge is "Review and examine the oppressive structures that perpetuate harm to historically and systemically marginalized stakeholders of the region, explore alternative organizational structures, and present initial findings to the board."

We will be examining the ways that the Executive Board operates which perpetuate harm to BIPOC, LGBTQIA2+, and disabled stakeholders; exploring new ways of doing things; and presenting what we find to the MAR Executive Board during the Spring meeting. In recognizing that at the time of the ad-hoc committee's creation, the Executive Board was entirely white passing, and historically so, this ad-hoc is actively working to mitigate harmful practices and structures within the MAR Executive Board. This represents the initial phase of a much longer process toward becoming an anti-oppressive organization.

This ad-hoc committee will be meeting with and interviewing all heads of MAR committees to inquire about potential harmful practices and policies. Alongside these meetings, the ad-hoc committee members will be performing a critical review of the MAR constitution and by-laws. In noting that we have implicit bias as all white members of the ad-hoc committee, we will be inviting consultant review of our findings.

If you are interested in volunteering your time as a consultant, please reach out to either of the co-chairs:

CJ Shiloh: governmentrelations@maramta.org

Stephenie Sofield: governmentrelationselect@maramta.org

[Image Description: Megaphone image, top center. In black text, “MAR-AMTA”. In blue text, “Anti-Oppressive Accountability Ad-hoc Committee”. In black text, “Last Call for Interviews Deadline: March 1st, 2021”. In blue text, “If you are interested in being interviewed, please contact either of the co-chairs:”. In black text, “CJ Shiloh: governmentrelations@maramta.org Stephanie Solfield: governmentrelationselect@maramta.org”]



Post 3: Dee Kelliher, 1/25/21, Twitter

MAR-AMTA @MARAMTA

· Jan 25

If interested in being interviewed by the Anti-Oppressive Accountability Ad-Hoc Committee, please contact governmentrelations@maramta.org or governmentrelationselect@maramta.org. The deadline for completing interviews is March 1st, 2021.



MAR-AMTA @MARAMTA · Jan 25

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If interested in being interviewed by the Anti-Oppressive Accountability Ad-Hoc Committee, please contact governmentrelations@maramta.org or governmentrelationselect@maramta.org. The deadline for completing interviews is March 1st, 2021.

**ANTI-OPPRESSIVE
ACCOUNTABILITY
AD-HOC COMMITTEE**

LAST CALL FOR INTERVIEWS
DEADLINE: MARCH 1ST, 2021

Appendix E: Educational Materials

Weblinks

1. Anti-Oppressive Resource and Training Alliance (AORTA):
https://aorta.coop/portfolio_page/infiltration-how-the-values-of-systems-of-oppression-tend-to-arise-in-co-ops/?fbclid=IwAR2a8LRRib2u8eo_OIP-f2P87U-zQpsMdy6mBJdvO4vlyahSZGQSIJ9CZoQ
2. Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity: <https://www.idrinstitute.org/dmis/>
3. Anti-Racism Resource: <https://leagueofchicagotheatres.org/anti-racism-resources/>
4. White Supremacy Culture Characteristics:
<http://www.whitesupremacyculture.info/characteristics.html>
5. Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist Multicultural Organization:
https://www.aesa.us/conferences/2013_ac_presentations/Continuum_AntiRacist.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2WlIiq4gwhnMNlds3aGO3e6i7cxOqYT3MXVVqDqt9uJB0TSDtP7bablE
6. Critique of Robert's Rules of Order:
<https://aninjusticemag.com/roberts-rules-suck-47b689f3c48f>

Images

Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist Multicultural Organization

MONOCULTURAL ==> MULTICULTURAL ==> ANTI-RACIST ==> ANTI-RACIST MULTICULTURAL					
Racial and Cultural Differences Seen as Deficits ==> Tolerant of Racial and Cultural Differences ==> Racial and Cultural Differences Seen as Assets					
Exclusive An Exclusionary Institution	2. Passive A "Club" Institution	3. Symbolic Change A Compliance Organization	4. Identity Change An Affirming Institution	5. Structural Change A Transforming Institution	6. Fully Inclusive Anti-Racist Multicultural Organization in a Transformed Society
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intentionally and publicly excludes or segregates African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans Intentionally and publicly enforces the racist status quo throughout institution Institutionalization of racism includes formal policies and practices, teachings, and decision making on all levels Usually has similar intentional policies and practices toward other socially oppressed groups such as women, gays and lesbians, Third World citizens, etc. Openly maintains the dominant group's power and privilege 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tolerant of a limited number of "token" People of Color and members from other social identity groups allowed in with "proper" perspective and credentials. May still secretly limit or exclude People of Color in contradiction to public policies Continues to intentionally maintain white power and privilege through its formal policies and practices, teachings, and decision making on all levels of institutional life Often declares, "We don't have a problem." Monocultural norms, policies and procedures of dominant culture viewed as the "right" way" business as usual" Engages issues of diversity and social justice only on club member's terms and within their comfort zone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes official policy pronouncements regarding multicultural diversity Sees itself as "non-racist" institution with open doors to People of Color Carries out intentional inclusiveness efforts, recruiting "someone of color" on committees or office staff Expanding view of diversity includes other socially oppressed groups <p><i>But...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Not those who make waves" Little or no contextual change in culture, policies, and decision making Is still relatively unaware of continuing patterns of privilege, paternalism and control Token placements in staff positions: must assimilate into organizational culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growing understanding of racism as barrier to effective diversity Develops analysis of systemic racism Sponsors programs of anti-racism training New consciousness of institutionalized white power and privilege Develops intentional identity as an "anti-racist" institution Begins to develop accountability to racially oppressed communities Increasing commitment to dismantle racism and eliminate inherent white advantage Actively recruits and promotes members of groups have been historically denied access and opportunity <p><i>But...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutional structures and culture that maintain white power and privilege still intact and relatively untouched 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commits to process of intentional institutional restructuring, based upon anti-racist analysis and identity Audits and restructures all aspects of institutional life to ensure full participation of People of Color, including their world-view, culture and lifestyles Implements structures, policies and practices with inclusive decision making and other forms of power sharing on all levels of the institutions life and work Commits to struggle to dismantle racism in the wider community, and builds clear lines of accountability to racially oppressed communities Anti-racist multicultural diversity becomes an institutionalized asset Redefines and rebuilds all relationships and activities in society, based on anti-racist commitments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future vision of an institution and wider community that has overcome systemic racism and all other forms of oppression. Institution's life reflects full participation and shared power with diverse racial, cultural and economic groups in determining its mission, structure, constituency, policies and practices Members across all identity groups are full participants in decisions that shape the institution, and inclusion of diverse cultures, lifestyles, and interest A sense of restored community and mutual caring Allies with others in combating all forms of social oppression Actively works in larger communities (regional, national, global) to eliminate all forms of oppression and to create multicultural organizations.

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Exclusionary Institution

- Intentionally and publicly excludes or segregates people of color, indigenous people, immigrants, women, LGBTQ people, poor and working class people, and/or disabled people.
- Intentionally and publicly enforces oppressive belief systems throughout institution.
- Institutionalization of oppression includes formal policies and practices, teachings, and decision making on all levels.
- Openly maintains the dominant group's power and privilege (white people, men, straight people, cisgender people, rich and middle class people, able bodied people).

Tokenizing Institution

- Tolerant of a limited number of "token" people from oppressed social groups so long as they have "proper" perspective and credentials.
- May still secretly limit or exclude oppressed people in contradiction to public policies.

- Often declares, “We don’t have a problem” as a way to silence critiques of oppressive dynamics.
- Continues to intentionally maintain dominant group’s power and privilege through its formal policies and practices, teachings, and decision making on all levels of institutional life.
- Monocultural norms, policies and procedures of dominant culture viewed as the “right” way.
- Engages issues of diversity and social justice only on club member’s terms and within their comfort zone.

Compliance Institution

- Makes official policy pronouncements regarding commitments to “diversity.”
- Sees itself as “non- oppressive” institution with open doors to all people.
- Sponsors “diversity trainings.”
- Carries out intentional inclusiveness efforts, recruiting “someone of color,” “a LGBTQ person,” “a disabled person,” etc. on committees or office staff, but not those who “make waves.”
- Little or no change in culture, policies, and decision making.
- Is still relatively unaware of continuing patterns of privilege, paternalism and control.

Affirming Institution

- Develops an analysis of systemic oppression.
- Sponsors anti-oppression trainings and ongoing study on a range of topics.
- New analysis of institutionalized power, privilege, and oppression.
- Develops intentional identity as an “anti- oppressive” institution.
- Begins integrating anti-oppression politics into organizational policies and governance documents.
- Actively recruits and promotes members of groups have been historically denied access and opportunity to certain some sectors of the organization.
- Begins to develop accountable relationships to oppressed communities.
- Institutional structures and culture that maintain power and privilege critiqued but still intact and relatively untouched.

Transforming Institution

- Commits to process of intentional institutional restructuring, based upon anti-oppression analysis and identity.
- Audits and restructures all aspects of institutional life to ensure full participation of people of color, indigenous people, immigrants, poor and working class people, LGBTQ people, women, and disabled people including their worldview and cultures.

- People more impacted by systemic oppression are involved in determining organizational structures and practices.
- Actively recruits, promotes, and retains members of oppressed groups to all areas of the organization.
- Commits to struggle to dismantle oppression in the wider community, and builds clear lines of accountability to oppressed communities.
- Implements structures, policies and practices with transparent decision making and power sharing on all levels of the institution.

Transformative Institution

- Future vision of an institution and wider community that has overcome systemic oppression.
- Institution's life reflects full participation and shared power with diverse racial, gender, and economic groups.
- Members across all identity groups work in horizontal relationships to determine the organization's mission, structure, constituency, policies and practices.
- Actively works in solidarity in larger communities (regional, national, global) to eliminate all forms of oppression.
- Members across all identity groups are full participants in decisions that shape the institution.
- A sense of restored community and mutual caring.

White Supremacy Culture

<p><u>Fear of Open Conflict</u> There are some topics and ways of talking about things that are just impolite to bring up because they make people uncomfortable.</p> <p>Sacrifice: Talking about important issues</p>	<p><u>Only One Right Way</u> There's a right way and a wrong way to do everything.</p> <p>Sacrifice: Multiple perspectives</p>	<p><u>Perfectionism</u> Anything less than perfect is unacceptable, so don't mess up!</p> <p>Sacrifice: Celebrating growth and progress</p>	<p><u>Sense of Urgency</u> The faster and more efficient everything is, the better.</p> <p>Sacrifice: Thoughtfulness in action</p>
<p><u>Worship of the Written Word</u> If it's not in a book or written rules, it doesn't exist!</p> <p>Sacrifice: Opinions and experiences of individuals</p>	<p><u>Paternalism</u> The people with the most power know what's best for everyone else. That's why they're in charge.</p> <p>Sacrifice: Creative thinking</p>	<p><u>Either/Or Thinking</u> Things are either one way or another: good/bad, right/wrong.</p> <p>Sacrifice: Complexity of problems</p>	<p><u>Quantity over Quality</u> If the results can't be measured, it doesn't matter.</p> <p>Sacrifice: Unmeasurable qualities and process</p>
<p><u>Power Hoarding</u> It's best if a few people are in charge because, if everyone had a say, we'd never get anything done.</p> <p>Sacrifice: Democratic decision making</p>	<p><u>I'm the Only One</u> In order for things to be done right, "I have to do it."</p> <p>Sacrifice: Teamwork and shared responsibility</p>	<p><u>Individualism</u> This world is competitive, so you have to focus on yourself.</p> <p>Sacrifice: Cooperation and collaboration</p>	<p><u>Progress is Bigger, More</u> The more we do, the better we're doing.</p> <p>Sacrifice: Quality of work</p>
<p><u>Right to Comfort</u> People with power and privilege have the right to feel emotionally comfortable wherever they are.</p> <p>Sacrifice: Safety of marginalized groups</p>	<p><u>Objectivity</u> If you look at things without emotion, you can be neutral and see the truth.</p> <p>Sacrifice: Feelings</p>	<p><u>Defensiveness</u> Criticizing people in power is rude and disrespectful.</p> <p>Sacrifice: Self-reflection</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Based on "White Supremacy Culture" (Okun, 2001) @antiracismeveryday</p>

Picture ID:

Fear of Open Conflict: There are some topics and ways of talking about things that are just impolite to bring up because they make people uncomfortable. Sacrifice: talking about important issues

Worship of the Written Word: If it's not in a book or written rules, it doesn't exist! Sacrifice: Opinions and experiences of individuals.

Power Hoarding: It's best if a few people are in power because if everyone had a say, we'd never get anything done. Sacrifice: democratic decision making.

Right to Comfort: People with power and privilege have the right to feel emotionally comfortable wherever they are. Sacrifice: safety of marginalized groups.

Only One Right Way: There's a right way and a wrong way to do everything. Sacrifice: multiple perspectives.

Paternalism: The people with the most power know what's best for everyone else. That's why they're in charge. Sacrifice: Creative thinking.

I'm the Only One: In order for things to be done right, "I have to do it." Sacrifice: Teamwork and shared responsibility.

Objectivity: If you look at things without emotion, you can be neutral and see the truth. Sacrifice: feelings.

Perfectionism: Anything less than perfect is unacceptable; so don't mess up! Sacrifice: Celebrating growth and progress.

Either/Or Thinking: Things are either one way or another: good/bad, right/wrong. Sacrifice: Complexity of problems.

Individualism: This world is competitive, so you have to focus on yourself. Sacrifice: Cooperation and collaboration.

Defensiveness: Criticizing people in power is rude and disrespectful. Sacrifice: Self-reflection.

Sense of Urgency: The faster and more efficient everything is, the better. Sacrifice: Thoughtfulness in action.

Quantity Over Quality: If the results can't be measured, it doesn't matter. Sacrifice: Unmeasurable qualities and process.

Progress is Bigger, More: The more we do, the better we're doing. Sacrifice: Quality of work.

Based on "White Supremacy Culture" Okun (2001) @ antiracismeveryday

Appendix F: Documentation of Ad-Hoc Tasks and Time

[Link](#) to Excel document of documentation of ad-hoc tasks and hours.

	Task	Date	Task Related Time	Total Time Minutes	Total Time Hours		
Interviews							
<i>Paired Interview</i>							
CJ & Lauren	E2H	11/23/20	29				
	ADQ	2/1/21	86				
	C8H	3/18/21	38	153	2.55		
CJ	IO4	12/1/20	70				
	JYE	2/21/21	65	135	2.25		
Mike	8HX & Y0N	12/12/20	60				
	BN0	2/2/21	75	135	2.25		
Lauren	Q9E	2/2/21	37				
	2XD	11/18/20	30				
	EQF	1/25/21	35				
	2WZ	1/27/21	30				
(Validity)	Reviewing Interviews for continuity		403	535	8.92		
Stephenie	8JG Part 1	2/9/21	90				
	8JG Part 2	2/16/21	90				
	R5N	4/6/21	50				
	WE0	3/19/21	40				
	GOR/PAN	11/15/20	47				
	PAN	11/15/20	21				
	GOR	11/15/20	19				
	8AK	11/13/21	63				
	YBW	1/25/21	55	475	7.92		
			TOTAL TIME:	1433	23.89	1433	
Data Collation							
CJ	Q9E		60				
	2XD		60				
	EQF		75				
	8AK		90				
	BN0		90	375	6.25 hours		
Mike	GOR		60				
	PAN		60				

	YBW		60				
	5KD		30				
	JYE		60				
	WE0		60	330	5.5 hours		
Lauren	Y0N		60				
	8HX		60				
	EQF: 1 section		30				
	IO4		134				
	R5N		100	384	6.4 hours		
Stephenie	C8H		45				
	E2H		45				
	ADQ		105				
	8JG: Part 1		90				
	8JG: Part 2		90				
	GOR		30	405	6.75 hours		
			TOTAL TIME:	1494	24.9	1494	
Meetings- Planning							
Group		10/15/20	60				
		10/25/20	60				
		1/18/21	90				
		2/7/21	60				
		3/7/21	60	330	5.5 hours		
			TOTAL TIME:	330	5.5 hrs	330	
Conference Planning							
Meetings		3/29/21	90				
		4/8/21	60				
		4/11/21	60	210	2.5 hours		
CJ	Individual Prep		30				
Mike	Individual Prep		45				
Lauren	Individual Prep		120				
Stephenie	Individual Prep		60				
PowerPoint							
Lauren			60				

Lauren & Stephenie			35	350	5.83		
			TOTAL TIME:	560	9.33	560	
Conference							
Group	Presentation	4/11/21	50	50	0.83 hrs		
			TOTAL TIME:	50	0.83 hrs	50	
Meetings - Distillation							
Group		3/24/21	60				
		4/27/21	90				
		5/7/21	90				
		5/17/21	60				
		5/23/21	75				
		5/26/21	75				
		6/2/21	120				
Individual Prep- Analysis & Recommendations							
CJ			30				
Lauren			60				
Mike			30				
Stephenie			45				
Meetings - Analysis & Recommendations							
Group		6/8/21	60				
Writing Final Report							
CJ & Stephenie		6/2/21	60				
CJ & Lauren		6/10/21	30				
CJ			60				
Lauren			240				
Mike			60				
Stephenie			345				
			TOTAL TIME:	1590	26.5 hours	1590	
				TOTAL TIME	5457 minutes	90.95 hours	