



NBCDI
National Black Child
Development Institute



REIMAGINING NBCDI'S FAMILY EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM TO ADVANCE SYSTEMS CHANGE



Lola Rooney, President of BCDI - Philadelphia & Vicinity

Lola M. Grove Rooney is a 25-year retired veteran of the School District of Philadelphia, being one of the founding teachers of an iconic Alternative Program known as G.A.M.P. (Girard Academic Music Program). In 2011 she was elected as the President and Executive Director of BCDI – Philadelphia & Vicinity. Because of her work in the Y and continued work in the community, BCDI- Philadelphia & Vicinity partnered with ParentChild+ Philadelphia.

Jon Law, Director of Fellowships & Convenings at NBCDI

Jon Law has ten years of experience in strategic planning, organizational development, and program management. As the Director of Fellowships and Convenings at NBCDI, his work is focused on strategies and initiatives that bring national and local experts and communities together to envision and create the world Black children deserve.

Tiffany Ferrette, Senior Consultant at NBCDI

Tiffany Ferrette is an education and social policy professional, who is currently a Senior Consultant on the National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI)'s Policy and Research team and a Part-Time Professor in The Catholic University's School of Professional Studies Department of Education. Tiffany has previously held roles at the Center for Law and Social Policy, the National Governors Association, and the Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools.

NBCDI IS THE PREEMINENT VOICE FOR BLACK CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.

We are the only national organization focused solely on the unique attributes and needs of Black children, birth through age 8. NBCDI is engaged in the process of building the world Black children deserve to be born into.

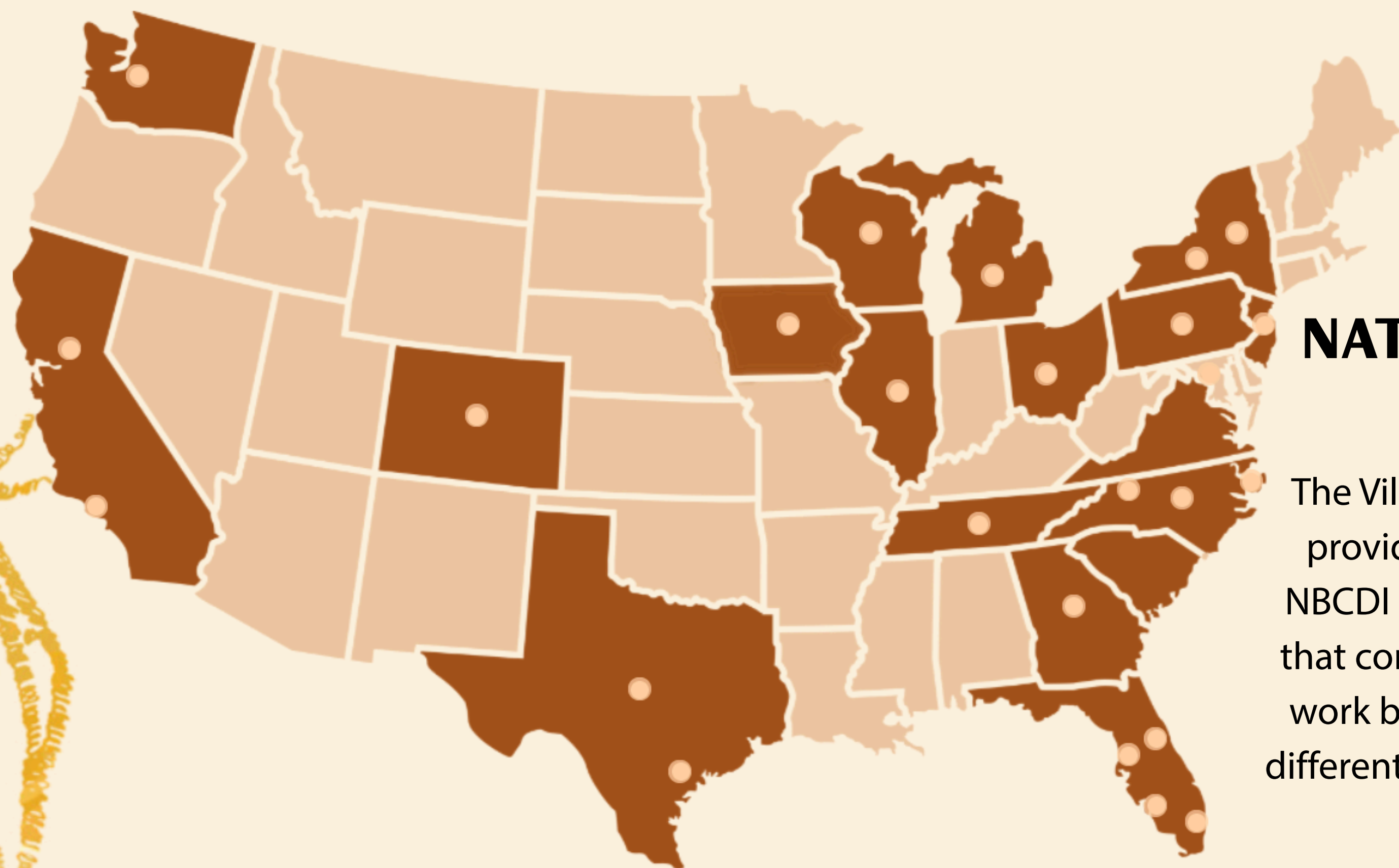
Our values are:

- Equity as process.
- Justice as goal.
- Afrofuturism as guide.



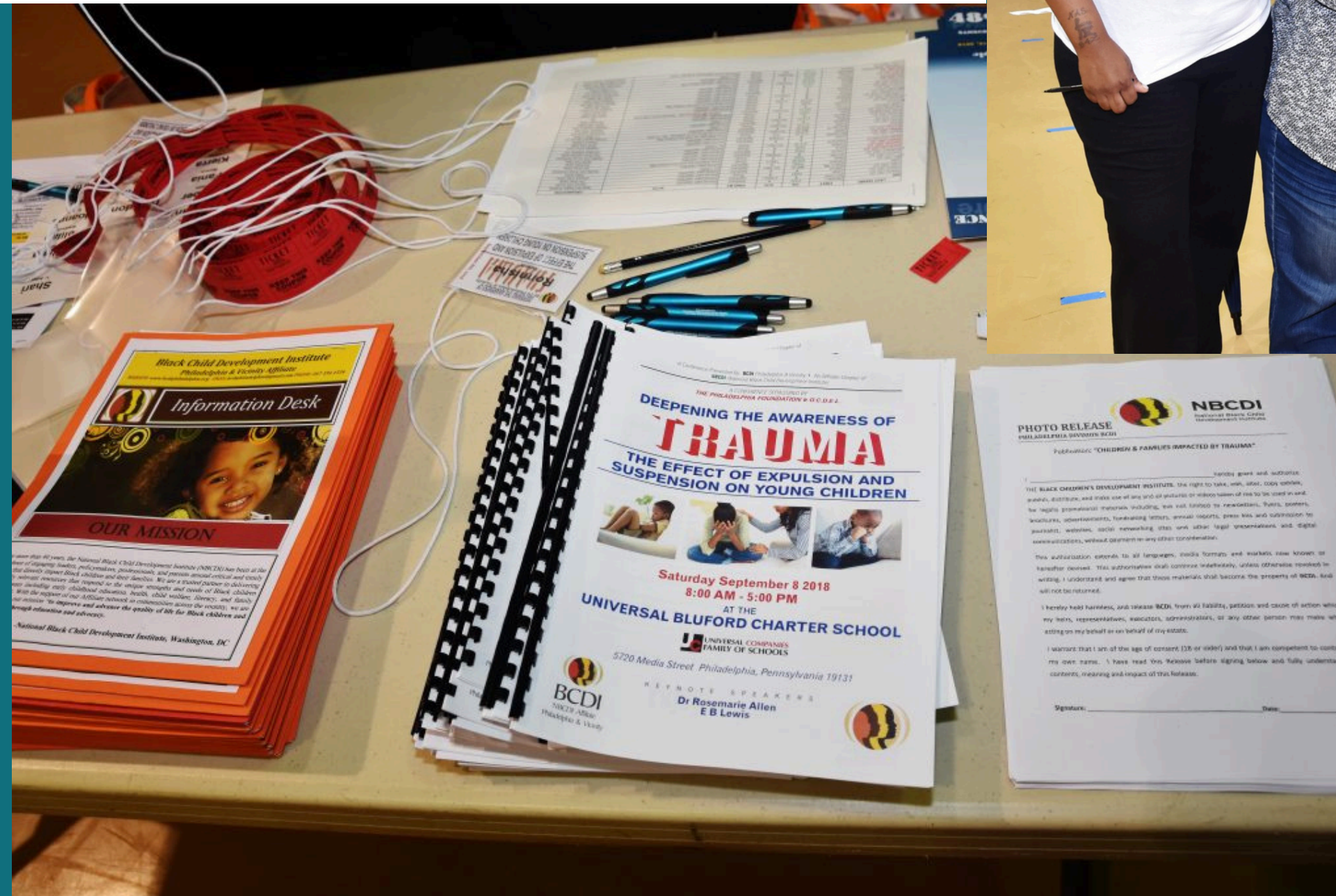
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NATIONAL VILLAGE NETWORK

The Villages often are the direct provider of the programs that NBCDI develops and the experts that connect the National office's work back to the experiences of different Black communities across the country.





AFROFUTURIST SYSTEMS DESIGN

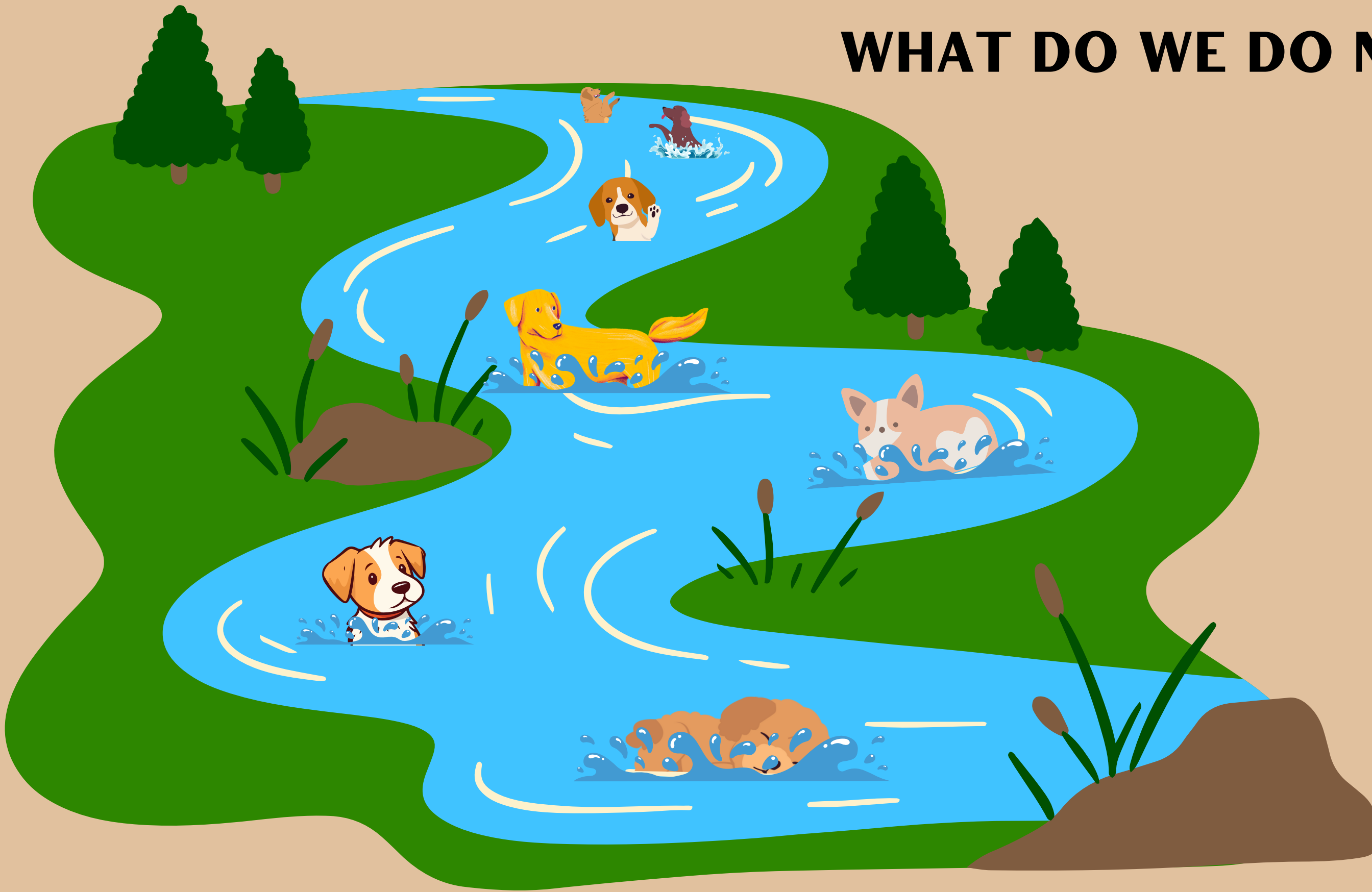
AFROFUTURISM

- The recognition and belief that the systemic changes needed to realize the liberated futures Black people deserve, must come from the collective imagination and vision of Black people.
- The future that Black children deserve and need is not bound by what exists today or by white-centered ways of thinking.
- The presence of what is good and necessary for Black children, not just the absence of what is bad today.



WE SEE A RIVER FULL OF PUPPIES IN DANGER.

WHAT DO WE DO NEXT?



TRANSACTIONAL WORK = ADDRESSES IMMEDIATE PROBLEM OR THE INDIVIDUAL, REACTS TO EVENTS



**WE ALSO MUST ASK: WHY ARE THERE
PUPPIES IN THE RIVER?**

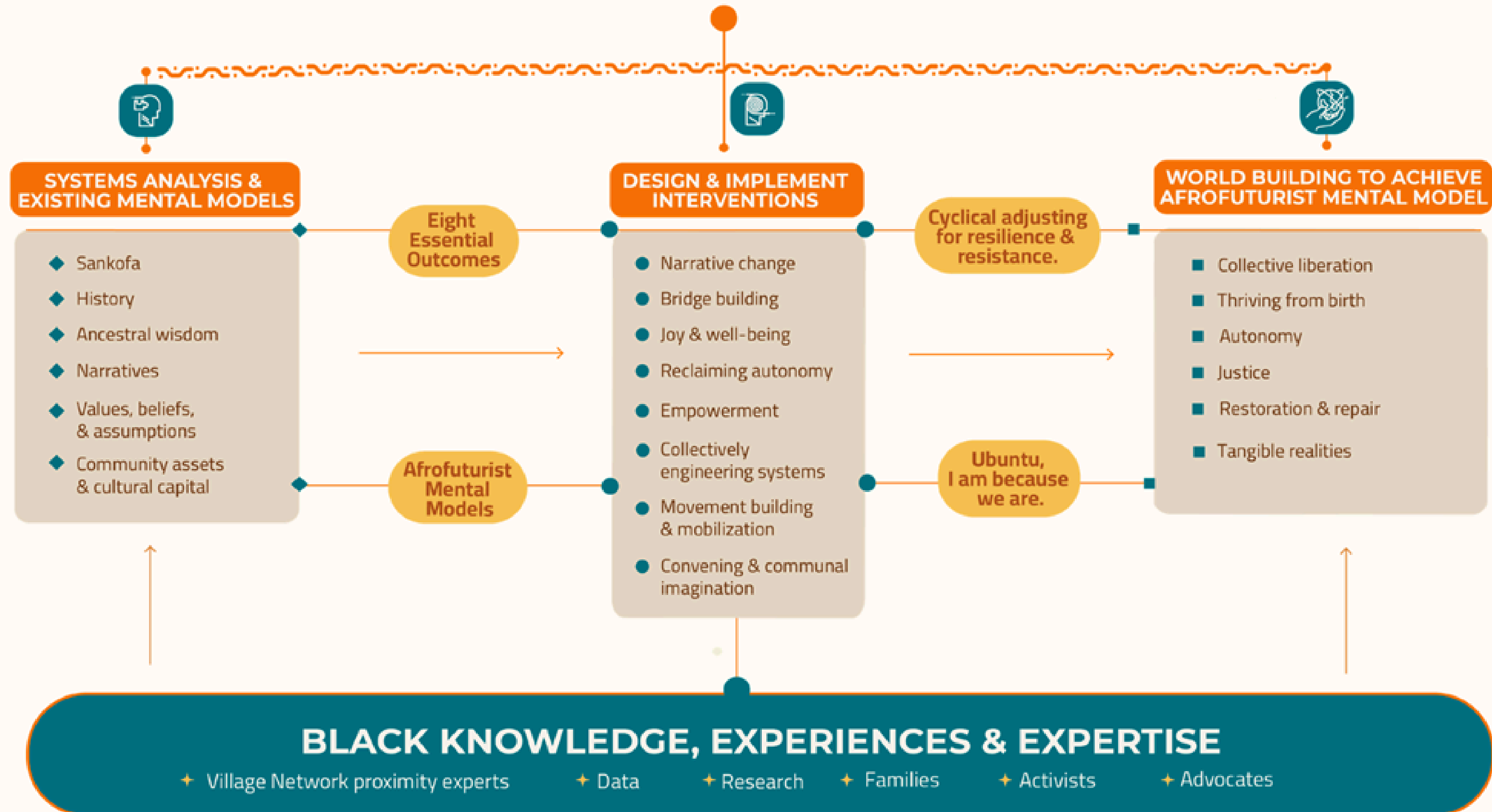
**TRANSFORMATIONAL
WORK = GOES TO THE
SOURCE OF THE
PROBLEM, MOVES
BEYOND REACTION**

Transactional work is necessary **and**
transformational work is necessary.



NBCDI® AFROFUTURIST

SYSTEM DESIGN PROCESS



FAMILY EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM



GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF FEP

1. Parents want what's best for their children.
2. Parents know best what they need to strengthen their parenting skills as their children's first, most important, and lifelong teachers.
3. Parents learn best when they are involved in selecting the topics and activities developed to ensure their families' success.
4. Parents will make the best choices for their children when they are offered effective and relevant information, resources, and support.

FEP is a linear curriculum-based program with 12 weekly sessions that covers topics like health and wellness, positive guidance, literacy and numeracy, and childhood transitions.

NATIONAL BLACK CHILD DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE'S PERSPECTIVE

The Family Empowerment Program is program designed by NBCDI to be delivered by our Village Network.

- Each Village may vary in their delivery, which makes it difficult to ensure fidelity
- In-person vs virtual
- Local partnerships
- Additional supports like technology, child care, meals



BCDI – PHILADELPHIA & VICINITY'S PERSPECTIVE



- What were some of the strategies that BCDI – Philadelphia used to engage parents in FEP?
- What were successes that you saw from FEP?
- What were some of the challenges?



REIMAGINING FAMILY EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

SYSTEMS-LEVEL THINKING

- Individual level is necessary but must be done in partnership with systems change
- Moving forward, we want FEP to strengthen and emphasize families' knowledge, skills, and confidence with navigating systems and advocating for their children.
- Focus on parents as leaders, advocates, changemakers for their families. Families are the first and best advocates for children.
- The problem is in the systems that Black children and their families live in. The current political and policy environment is growing more hostile and unstable—particularly for Black children and families.



IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM AT SYSTEMS LEVEL

- Parents can be drivers of community-based solutions and systemic change
- How resources are allocated, what those resources are, what's needed in their community, what works in their community
- Parents can be empowered to engage in...
 - Parent-teacher conferences
 - School board meetings
 - Community meetings, public hearings
 - Serving on boards and commissions
 - Organizing with other parents



Hypothetical: In your program delivery, as you are running parent cohort programs or visitor programs, do you encounter challenges and barriers to the parents that can't be addressed by parents changing their behaviors at home, e.g., school policies, community issues, etc.?

That's where we see a Reimagined Family Empowerment Program filling in a gap where we want to equip parents with the knowledge, tools, skills, etc. to address these macro-level issues.

TRANSACTIONAL/TRANSFORMATIONAL ACTIVITY

1. Walk around the room to see each of the questions
2. For each question, ask what the question looks like at the transactional level and the transformational level.
 - Transactional Level: Changes that individuals can make to address the issue. Fixes the problem for that individual.
 - Transformational Level: Changes that systems can make to prevent or reduce the issue. Fixes the problem for systems or structures.