



Strategic Diversity Initiatives™

Training. Consulting. Direction.

Build Skills & Take Action to Stand Up for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

Anne Phibbs, PhD (she/her)

Wisconsin Libraries Talk about Race

May 17, 2023

Agenda

Part 1:

Review & Framing:

Microaggressions, Implicit Bias, and Allyship

Part 2:

From Allyship to Leadership:

Agency, Accountability, and Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

Part 3:

Best Practices:

Building our Skills, and Learning from our Mistakes

Part 1:
Review & Framing:
Microaggressions, Implicit Bias,
and Allyship

Micro-inequities or Microaggressions

From *Microaggressions: Power, Privilege and Everyday Life*
microaggressions.com

This blog seeks to provide a visual representation of the everyday of “microaggressions.” Each event, observation and experience posted is not necessarily particularly striking in and of themselves. Often, they are never meant to hurt - acts done with little conscious awareness of their meanings and effects. **Instead, their slow accumulation during a childhood and over a lifetime is in part what defines a marginalized experience,** making explanation and communication with someone who does not share this identity particularly difficult.

Tips for Taking Action

5 questions to ask yourself when weighing the consequences of responding to a microaggression (and other disrespectful behavior):

1. If I respond, could my physical safety be in danger?
2. If I respond, will the person become defensive and will this lead to an argument?
3. If I respond, how will this affect my relationship with this person (e.g., co-worker, family member, etc.)
4. If I don't respond, will I regret not saying something?
5. If I don't respond, does that convey that I accept the behavior or statement?

“How to Respond to Microaggressions,” Hahna Yoon, *New York Times*, 3/3/20

Tips for Taking Action

Suggestions from diversity consultant Dr. Diane Goodman:

- **Ask for more clarification:** “Could you say more about what you mean by that?” “How have you come to think that?”
- **Separate intent from impact:** “I know you didn’t realize this, but when you _____ (comment/behavior), it was hurtful/offensive because _____. Instead you could _____ (different language or behavior.)”
- **Share your own process:** “I noticed that you _____ (comment/behavior). I used to do/say that, too, but then I learned _____.”

“How to Respond to Microaggressions,” Hahna Yoon, *New York Times*, 3/3/20

Implicit/Unconscious/Unexamined Bias

“Unexamined bias is a form of stereotyping that is often **unintentional, automatic, and outside of our awareness**. Often contradicting to our conscious beliefs. Also called subtle or implicit bias. Framing it specifically as “unexamined” puts onus for change on the person who harbors or acts on bias, holding them accountable.”

Center for Institutional Change, University of Washington

An Ally is someone who is willing to **pay attention to – and take action around - the social, economic & political differences and inequities that attend to people** based on distinctions of race, ethnicity, age, class, sexual orientation, gender identity & expression, disability, religious or spiritual identity, and nationality (this is not an exhaustive list)

An Ally/Upstander is someone who is willing to pay attention to – and take action around – the social, economic & political differences and inequities that attend to people based on social identities.

An Ally/Upstander is not perfect; they are not fearless (they get scared); they make mistakes – and they learn from those mistakes. But they continue to act to address bias, microaggressions, bullying, and exclusion.

What Holds me Back?

Think about how you do – and sometimes don't – show up as an ally/upstander. For example, imagine you witness these statements:

- a white colleague says, “this diversity stuff is going too far; I don't apply for manager positions anymore – we all know they're only hiring people of color”
- an older male colleague restates a great idea that was first shared by a younger female colleague in a meeting, acting like it was his idea
- someone uses the wrong pronoun for a colleague who identifies as nonbinary
- a community member comments that another community member with frustrating behavior must be “off their meds”
- at lunch, a colleague says, “I don't understand all the fasting during Ramadan – I don't think I could make it without eating all day”

Do you think you would say anything? If you wouldn't (and most of us don't speak up all the time), what would hold you back? Be as honest as possible.

Part 2:
From Allyship to Leadership:
Agency, Accountability, and
Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

Encouraging Agency

- **Creating an institution that is open, inclusive, and equitable – that is free from bullying, microaggressions, and bias – is the responsibility of every person involved in that organization.** It is the responsibility of students, staff, faculty, administrators, and trustees.
 - **Making substantive changes around diversity, equity, and inclusion requires identifying – and developing – DEI leaders in every part of the institution.** It's not about a top down vs. a grassroots approach. It's about educating and empowering everyone to see equity and inclusion as integral to the role they play in their institution.
 - **Catherine Mattice, President of Civility Partners, suggests that “bystanders” to bullying and incivility [and microaggressions] should be renamed “reinforcers.”**
- As people who care about DEI in our libraries, we need to be asking: how are we allowing our patrons, employees, volunteers, leaders, and trustees to reinforce microaggressions, bias, and inequity?**

Accountability: Creating a Culture of Respect, Civility, and Inclusion

From “Brene on Shame and Accountability,” *Unlocking Us Podcast*, Brene Brown, July 1, 2020

Accountability is not comfortable...being held accountable [for racism] and feeling shame is not the same thing as being shamed.

“Shame is the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing that we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love, belonging, and connection.” **Guilt is “I did something bad.” Shame is “I am bad.”**

During every one of the many times that I have been held accountable for not recognizing my own privilege, or centering my story or my experience, every time, I’ve experienced shame. Not guilt. I didn’t feel like, “Oh. I did something bad,” or “These actions are not aligning with my values.” My response, first response, has always been full-on shame.

Accountability: Creating a Culture of Respect, Civility, and Inclusion

From “Brene on Shame and Accountability,” *Unlocking Us Podcast*, Brene Brown, July 1, 2020

And it’s our responsibility for experiencing and regulating our own emotions. **It’s my job to regulate my emotion, move through shame in a productive way, without defensiveness, without doubling down, without rationalizing...**

...we solve the problem of accountability with action...It’s “What am I going to do differently? How am I going to show up differently? What choices, different choices, am I going to make moving forward? How am I going to think about the language that I’m using? And how am I going to think about how I’m showing up?” Change, action, is probably the best cure for the shame we experience around accountability.

Have you ever...

- met someone who was interesting, but didn't know when to stop talking & never asked you a single question?
- worked with someone whose anger was always so close to the surface, you worried they might "go off" at any minute?
- been around someone who seemed to have very low self-esteem, such that they never stood up for themselves?
- worked with someone who
 - took credit for other's work
 - never apologized, even when wrong
 - acted like a bully
- interacted with someone who
 - made mountains out of mole hills
 - panicked at the slightest problem
 - had a negative attitude towards just about everything?

Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

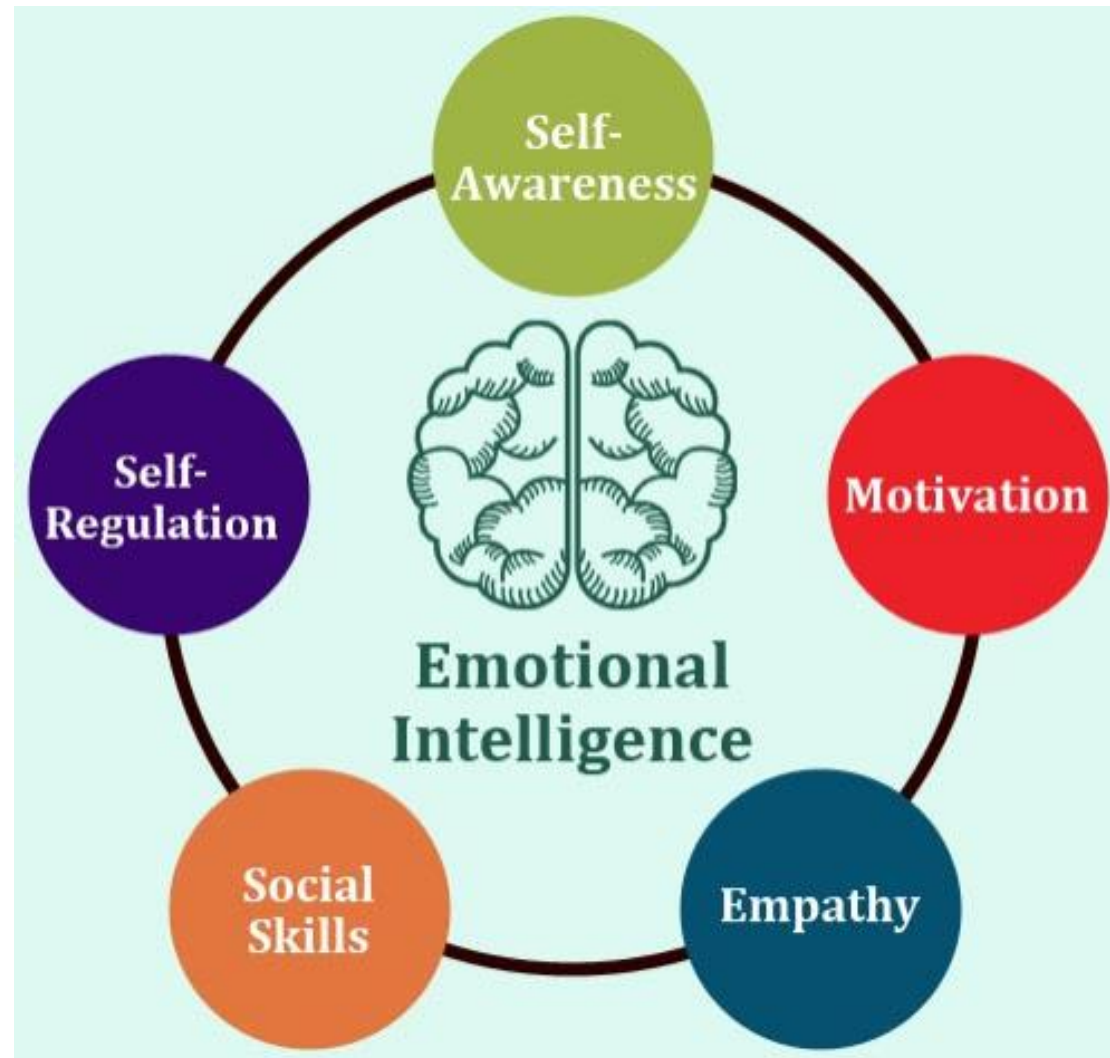
Emotional Intelligence (EQ or EI) is a term created by two researchers – Peter Salavoy and John Mayer – and popularized by Dan Goleman.

Daniel Goleman is a psychologist and was a *New York Times* reporter focusing on the brain and behavioral sciences. His 1995 book, *Emotional Intelligence*, was on *The New York Times* bestseller list for a year-and-a-half, with more than 5,000,000 copies in print worldwide in 40 languages.

They define EQ as the ability to:

- **Recognize, understand and manage our own emotions**
- **Recognize, understand and influence the emotions of others**

Emotional Intelligence (EQ)



From Permission to Feel : Unlocking the Power of Emotions to Help Our Kids, Ourselves, and Our Society Thrive, 2019, by Dr. Mark Brackett, Director, Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. Brackett identifies five skills necessary for becoming an “emotion scientist”

- **Recognize** our own emotions and those of others, not just in the things we think, feel, and say but in facial expressions, body language, vocal tones and other nonverbal signals
- **Understand** those feelings and determine their source - what experiences actually caused them – and then see how they’ve influenced our behaviors
- **Label** emotions with a nuanced vocabulary
- **Express** our feelings in accordance with cultural norms and social contexts in a way that tries to inform and invites empathy from the listener
- **Regulate** emotions, rather than let them regulate us, by finding practical strategies for dealing with what we and others feel

*Brene Brown on Empathy
(RSA, 2013)*

*Brene Brown on Blame
(RSA, 2015)*

The mission of the RSA (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce) is to enrich society through ideas and action.

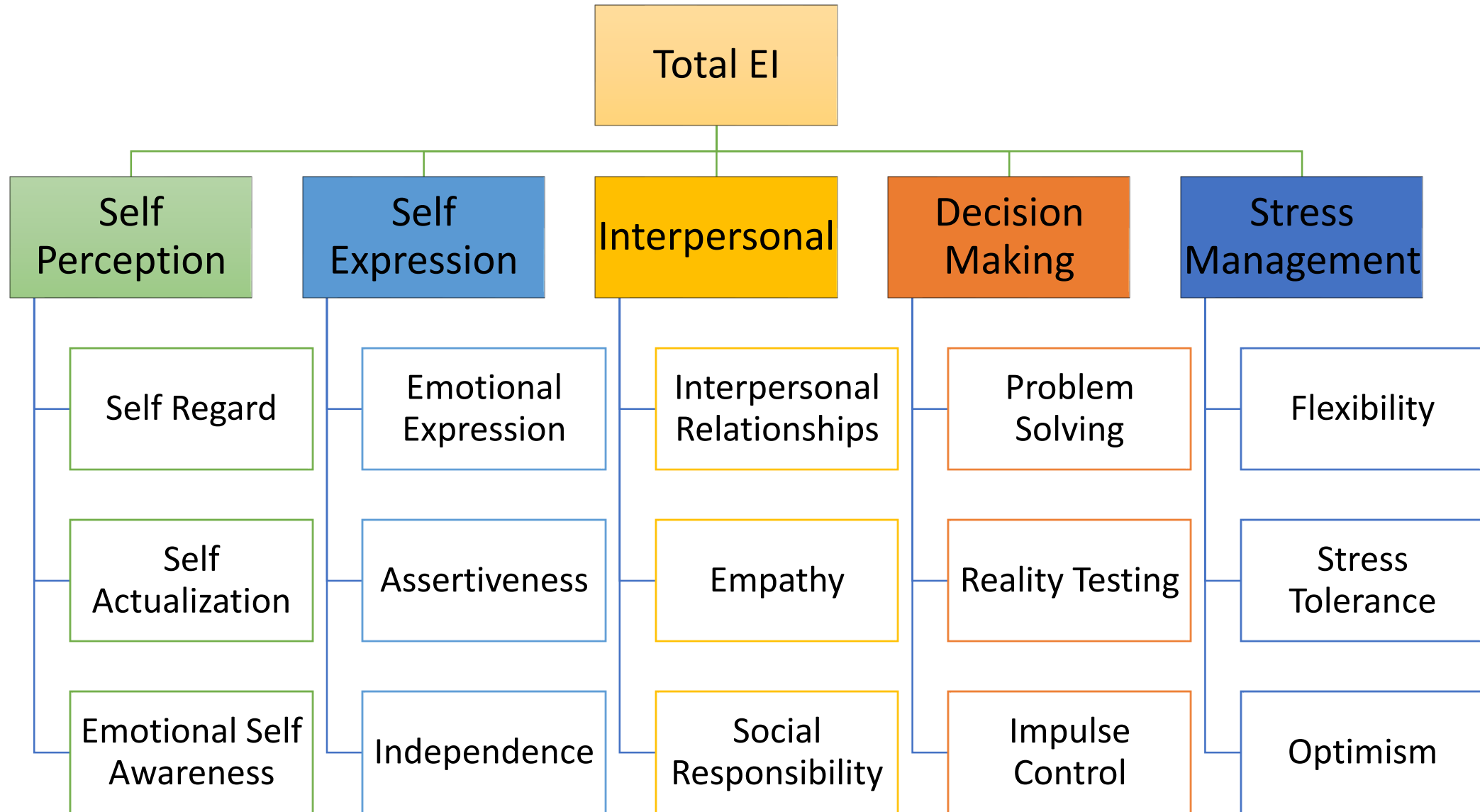
Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

The **EQ-i**^{2.0} Model



Copyright © 2011 Multi-Health Systems Inc. All rights reserved.
Based on the original BarOn EQ-i authored by Reuven Bar-On, copyright 1997.

Emotional Intelligence (EQ)



Questions to Consider: Understanding Your Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

Consider the EQ domains and how they operate in your life:

Self Perception

Self Expression

Interpersonal

Decision Making

Stress Management

- **Which domains are well developed? How can you tell?**
- **Which domains could use more development? How can you tell?**
- **Have you ever gotten feedback, positive or negative, about any of these domains?**

Leadership & Vulnerability

In Brene Brown's 2012 TED Talk, "The Power of Vulnerability," she talks about people who are "whole-hearted" – who have a sense of worthiness and love & belonging. In her research, she found whole-hearted people shared these traits:

- **Courage** – to be imperfect
 - **Compassion** – towards themselves and toward others
 - **Connection** – willingness to be authentic & real, not perfect
 - **Vulnerability** – fully embracing our own and others'
-
- How do you think vulnerability shows up in your work?
 - How do your social identities (race, gender, sexuality, disability, etc.) affect your ability to model vulnerability? How do your social identities affect how you need to balance vulnerability with competence and authority?
 - Is EQ a helpful frame for you? for DEI work? Why or why not?

Thoughts on EQ, Agency, Accountability, and Leadership

- **DEI work is never just intellectual; it involves emotions, identity, and relationships.** For this reason, having the best analysis or being the smartest person in the room won't be enough for leading people in DEI efforts.
- This work is about challenging – and changing – oppressive structures and systems that have been in place for centuries. **DEI leaders will always deal with pushback and resistance.**
- **Leaders model how to find agency and power** – and how to think and act strategically – even in the face of racism, misogyny, ableism, homo-bi-transphobia, xenophobia, ageism, elitism, islamophobia & anti-Semitism, etc.

Thoughts on EQ, Agency, Accountability, and Leadership

- **DEI work will often be slow, overwhelming, and traumatic.** A DEI leader models how to take care of themselves by being realistic and setting limits, respecting their own – and others' – boundaries, and leaving room for emotional work.
- **DEI leaders model how to hold each other accountable;** leaders admit their own biases and mistakes; leaders make amends; and leaders model how to do better.
- **DEI leaders work to acknowledge and recognize their own privilege** and actively use it in the service of equity and inclusion.

Part 3:
Best Practices:
Building our Skills, and
Learning from our Mistakes

Best Practices for Bringing People into Authentic Dialogue around DEI

Assess your situation. Is this one where it makes sense for you to say something or otherwise interrupt some comments and/or behavior? Consider:

- **What kind of risk will I be taking if I do this?** (e.g., Is the person I am confronting my supervisor? Do they have power over me that they could wield in a hurtful way? Do I trust that they will treat me in a respectful manner, even if they disagree with me? Do I risk some kind of physical, emotional, and/or spiritual harm if I take this risk?)
- **Is this particular action worth my time and effort?** Do I have some “capital” I can expend here? That is, will I be taken seriously if I speak up? Would my efforts be better spent sending an email or letter to someone else in this organization?
- **Do I know what I want to achieve?** Am I ok if the person I confront either doesn't acknowledge my comment or reacts negatively? Am I “emotionally centered” enough to be able to handle any reaction that comes my way (e.g., am I, alone, confronting an entire group of hostile people)?

Best Practices for Bringing People into Authentic Dialogue around DEI

Always model the behavior you want from others. If you want a respectful, open, honest conversation, it starts with you. However hurtful, discriminatory, or wrong someone else's comments and/or behaviors may be, it will be counterproductive to engage in language or actions that are demeaning, hurtful, rude or disrespectful.

It is also a good idea to stay away from being sarcastic, snide, mocking or arrogant (even though this can be very tempting). No one ever really learns or grows because someone made a snide or sarcastic comment. While it's ok to be angry, try to avoid yelling or making threatening comments or gestures. ***Again, the goal here is education.*** It's not about winning a point or making someone feel bad or wrong. It's about helping them understand something from a different perspective.

Best Practices for Bringing People into Authentic Dialogue around DEI

Model active listening behaviors. Listen carefully, no matter how wrong and hurtful you think someone is. *Listen not just for what they are saying, but for how you think they might be feeling. Sometimes comments that are overtly racist, sexist, ableist, heterosexist, etc... mask deeper feelings of anger, confusion, hurt, and even shame.*

While you don't want to pretend you are someone's therapist, it might move a conversation along if you can paraphrase back what you hear, emphasizing the feelings underneath (e.g., It sounds like you're frustrated and maybe even sad that we're moving from a Christmas Party to a Holiday Party. I know you were always very involved with getting the Christmas Party organized every year.).

Best Practices for Bringing People into Authentic Dialogue around DEI

Use yourself as an example. None of us were born with the knowledge we now have about equity and diversity. *Use your own stories of how you've “unlearned” certain hurtful, inaccurate, and misleading information.* You'll be modeling how to own our mistakes; you'll send a message that we're all good people, even as we hold stereotypes and biases; and you'll demonstrate that all of us have the capacity to educate ourselves so we can be allies to those with less privilege.

Best Practices for Bringing People into Authentic Dialogue around DEI

Reframe. Reframe. Reframe. The best “diversity and inclusion education” comes when we are able to help someone understand a particular topic or issue using a different frame – with different assumptions and different conclusions.

One example of this kind of “reframing” is pointing out the difference between creating public policy based on identity and creating it based on behavior.

What questions/concerns
do you have?



Strategic Diversity Initiatives™

Training. Consulting. Direction.

Thank you!

Anne Phibbs, PhD (she/her)
anne.phibbs@strategicdi.com
strategicdi.com