

## Only One Right Way

### Looks like:

- The belief that there is one right way to do things. Once people are introduced to ‘the right way,’ they will willingly adopt it.
- When someone does not adapt or change, then something is wrong with them.
- Causes significant barriers to change, agility, innovation, and **teamwork**.
- Creates a **sense of exclusion and isolation** for people who are not comfortable or at ease with ‘the right way’.
- Often involves **stubbornness and dogmatism**: a position is final and not up for discussion, even in fairly low-stakes decisions and conversations.

### Key Questions to Help Y’all Reflect and Discuss:

- What kind of training or preparation might be needed to support staff and/or participants in negotiating change or being open to difference?
- What needs to happen in order to accommodate a range of learning styles, living conditions, or life responsibilities on our team?
- In what concrete ways are team members and the organization encouraged to explore other ways of being, knowing, and doing?
- Are individuals supported to learn from their mistakes? What happens when mistakes or challenges occur? What are our first reflexes?
- In what ways is a culture of learning and creativity fostered and embedded in the organization’s structure? When and how do we try to reflect on our work and imagine different ways of doing?
- How are outside stakeholders involved in the planning, outreach, implementation, and evaluation of projects, programs, or organizations?
- What techniques are used to regularly check-in with colleagues and outside stakeholders about needs, processes, and goals?
- How are differences in ability, skill level, income, language, location, perspective, etc. accommodated to ensure that all potential participants are able to take part?
- When unexpected issues or developments occur, how will they be addressed or responded to?

## Only One Right Way (cont.)

### Antidotes:

- Cultivate **flexibility and adaptability** in your organization.
- Accept that there are many ways to get to the same goal and be open to alternative routes.
- Once the group has made a decision to take a "**different**" path to achieving a goal, **honor that decision** and **see what can be learned** from that way (even and especially if it is not the way you would have chosen).
- Notice when people do things differently and how those different ways might improve your approach.
- Keep an eye out for the tendency in a group or an individual to keep pushing the same point over and over out of a belief that there is only one right way—**AND THEN NAME IT.**
- When working with communities from a different culture (whether individually or organizationally), be clear on what you have still to learn about their ways of doing.
- Never assume that you or your organization know what is best for other communities. Humility is essential in developing meaningful relationships with communities whose cultural background is different from yours or your organization's.