



## **The Leaders United for Change (LUC) Book Project: Learning from Our Experience Through a DEIAB Lens**

**Extended Abstract Submission Deadline: September 22, 2025**

### **Who are the Leaders United for Change?**

The Leaders United for Change (LUC) Project is a group of researchers, practitioners, and individuals with lived experience in the child welfare, behavioral health, and youth justice fields. We are dedicated to achieving and sustaining social equality and equity by fostering collaboration with stakeholders to ensure access to resources and opportunities for all. We strive that every individual will have equitable access to opportunities and resources. You can learn more about LUC [\[link\]](#).

Through various strategic goals and initiatives, The LUC group provides education and action-oriented resources and tools to create structural and systemic change through programming and research.

We are working on [a book that supports our mission and vision to promote social equity, equity, and racial justice](#) by ensuring access to resources and opportunities for all. We are thrilled to invite all practitioners and researchers in the field to contribute to a section(s) that centers on various aspects of diversity, equity, inclusion, access, and belonging (DEIAB). Check out who we are looking to contribute and sections you can contribute to, along with a brief description below.

### **Target Audience**

This book is intended for a diverse audience interested in learning, acting, and re-imagining the fields related to health and human services through a DEIAB lens. It will appeal to the current and future workforce, graduate students, faculty, researchers, management, and individuals who have lived experiences within the field to gain strategies and techniques to navigate challenging situations and strengthen their DEIAB efforts. This book will allow individuals to practice ways to disrupt and dismantle ways of knowing that have been historically harmful for historically underrepresented groups in the field.

We invite practitioners, researchers, and individuals with lived experience to submit a case study addressing one or more of the following sections of the book:



- a. **Section I:** Historically, companies have used Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility, and Belonging (DEIAB) and more as a tagline to demonstrate their willingness to be inclusive and equitable. Part of this effort is to hire people of color in leadership roles. However, the DEIAB landscape is currently shifting due to a multitude of reasons, some of which include a lack of funding, the political climate, and a desire not to change historical policies and practices within the organization.

**Leaders of Color in predominantly white organizations often experience leadership through a distinct and complex lens.** This chapter centers their voices, exploring the unique challenges and dynamics they encounter within these environments. It also offers guidance for colleagues, managers, and organizations on how to create more supportive, equitable spaces—equipping them with the awareness and tools needed to effectively uplift and partner with Leaders of Color in their leadership journeys.

- b. **Section II:** Scholars of Black Feminist Thought are keenly aware of the dual challenges Black women face in their personal and professional lives. These constant shifts, while potentially harmful, also serve as a force for societal change. While Black women are forced into distorted leadership roles that stifle their creativity and joy, they also have the power to create and transform spaces. By providing platforms for others to be seen, heard, and recognized, Black women are shaping and enriching organizations.

**In this chapter, Black women share personal narratives that illuminate how race, gender, class, and other intersecting identities shape their experiences in the workplace.** These stories reveal the layered complexities they navigate daily, offering critical insight into the structural and interpersonal dynamics at play. The chapter also provides thoughtful guidance for colleagues, leaders, and institutions on how to meaningfully support and stand in solidarity with Black women in professional spaces.

- c. **Section III:** Whiteness is a social construct that embraces White culture, ideology, racialization, expressions, experiences, ways of knowing, emotions, and behaviors. Unlike Blackness, Whiteness is normalized because White supremacy elevates White people to the apex of the racial hierarchy (Allen, 2001). Whiteness in the workplace centers on White ideals, values, or norms in daily practices and policies when companies say everyone brings a unique perspective (Matias, 2016). When dealing with candid conversations about race, White emotionality shows up like defensiveness, guilt, anger, sadness, denial, or silence. These emotions stem from a long history of suppressing the reality of race and feeling shame for such suppression (Matias, 2016).

**This chapter explores how white leaders' emotional responses and expressions can impact colleagues of color in the workplace.** It centers the ways in which dominant norms around emotionality—often shaped by whiteness—can unintentionally undermine, invalidate, or reinterpret the emotional expressions of BIPOC leaders, including emotions like passion, urgency, or vulnerability. White leaders contributing to this chapter reflect on moments when their emotional patterns disrupted or reframed the leadership presence of their colleagues of color. They also offer thought-provoking questions to support ongoing reflection and accountability for other white leaders navigating similar dynamics.



- d. **Section IV:** The experiences of Men of Color in the United States have often been silenced due to relentless societal pressure to hide their pain and suppress their emotions. Cultural norms have demanded that Men of Color present themselves as strong and resilient, without offering tools or strategies that are culturally relevant and trauma-informed to help them cope during challenging times. Throughout their lives, these men have been taught that they must be twice as talented, twice as smart, and work twice as hard just to access the same opportunities as their counterparts. They carry historical and generational trauma that has yet to be fully acknowledged or addressed within the mental health field. Understanding this societal pressure is essential to truly empathize with their lived experiences.

**In this section, we invite Men of Color who are navigating workplace environments where systemic and interpersonal forms of oppression hinder their ability to show up fully and authentically.** We are particularly interested in case studies that reflect their lived experiences—especially those involving interactions across lines of race and gender—and how these dynamics have impacted their mental and emotional well-being. Contributors will also offer thoughtful questions for critical reflection, encouraging readers to examine their own roles, behaviors, and responsibilities when facing or witnessing similar situations.

- e. **Section V:** DEIAB is under attack, and it is time for allies to become co-conspirators and put something on the line to push back and resist the dismantling of years of progress. Some challenges DEIAB practitioners need their leaders to continue to look at are ways to continue to financially support and physically attach themselves to the work of DEIAB.

**In this section, we are seeking visionary leaders who are reimagining the future of DEIAB (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility, and Belonging).** We welcome case studies that highlight bold, innovative approaches to advancing equity work—particularly those that challenge conventional frameworks and offer transformative pathways forward. Submissions should include practical recommendations and discussion prompts for fellow leaders to reflect on as they embark on similar initiatives. Areas of consideration may include, but are not limited to: managing and sustaining funding, decolonizing programs, practices, and policies, fostering authentic relationship-building, and addressing internalized barriers such as imposter syndrome.

In addition, contributors are invited to submit a case study centering one or more of the following areas:

- Leadership, trauma, mental health, joy, affirmation through the lens of people of color, colorism, intersectionality, Black womanhood, sexism, racism, gender, historical trauma and identity, decolonization, Indigeneity, sustainability, and reaching a glass or bamboo ceiling professionally

## **Abstract Submission Guidelines**



- Title Page
  - Case Study tentative title
  - Author name(s) (Please identify the corresponding author. This person will receive all communication regarding the submission)
  - Affiliation(s)
  - Email addresses for all authors
  - Date of submission
- Brief author(s) bio(s) or resume: Each author's bio should not exceed 150 words and should include a brief overview of their work in education and/or community settings. Authors may submit a bio or a resume.
- Optional: A song related to your case study
- Case Study Abstract

**Abstract:** This book decisively honors the lived experiences of leaders within the child welfare, behavioral health, and youth justice fields. It employs case studies and music as essential tools for healing and transformation, effectively highlighting both strengths and challenges in this critical area. With that in mind, please submit a 500-word abstract using a 12-point Arial font, outlining the proposed case study, including key themes and concepts.

A Draft abstract can be found by clicking [here](#).

**Submission Deadline:** The abstract submission deadline is **Monday, August 20, 2025**

**Timeline:**

- **Extended abstract deadline: September 22, 2025.**
- Selected abstract authors will be notified to submit the first draft of the full case study for review. The case study should not exceed 1,000 words. Please use 12-point Arial font, double-spaced, not including reference page (APA style 7, as needed). **By October 24, 2025.**
- Submission of the first draft for review. **By December 5, 2025.**
- Notice of final acceptance of case study with revision requests. **By January 26, 2026**
- Revision of final case study due. **By February 23, 2026.**

**Submission Instructions:**

Please email your case study abstract and resume or bio to [lucbookproject26@gmail.com](mailto:lucbookproject26@gmail.com) with the subject line "**Case Study Proposal Submission: [Your Last Name]**." For inquiries or additional information, please get in touch with Latesha Fussell or Donte Abram at [lucbookproject26@gmail.com](mailto:lucbookproject26@gmail.com)