

# Data for Change

Capacity building learning series

*“Ready, set, dataset!  
Planning for data collection”*

Presented by:  
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Medha Aurora



In Partnership With:



Supported by:



# Data for Change Project Model

## → Knowledge Mobilization Hub

- Project Logistics
- Partner Convening
- Host Knowledge Mobilization Online Hub

## → Capacity Building Sessions

- Facilitate capacity building sessions to support agencies with data collection & responsible usage

## → Community of Practice & Partnership Table

- Partnership Table support & participate in project implementation
- Community of Practice features a panelist discussion & peer support network for agencies

## → Capacity Building Sessions

- Facilitate capacity building sessions to support agencies with data collection & responsible usage



# Project Objective

To test SID collection with more service-users to better understand how to **best support agencies** in:

- a) collecting socio-demographic data
- b) using the data to advance better outcomes for equity-deserving communities
- c) socializing the collection methodology & use of tools across the community social services sector



### STAGE ONE: PLAN & BUILD

April: Organizational Readiness



May: Planning for Data Collection



May: CoP



### STAGE THREE: ANALYSIS & INTERPRET

August: Trauma Informed Practice



September: User-centered analysis



September: CoP



### STAGE TWO: COLLECT & STORE

June: Org. Change Management



July: Data collection tools and systems



July: CoP



### STAGE FOUR: SHARE & USE

October: Uses of Data




November: Learning for improvement



December: CoP



*All sessions will virtually be recorded and later uploaded to the knowledge hub website*



LogicalOutcomes is based in Toronto, on the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples. Toronto is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

As people who live and work in this place, we acknowledge our responsibility to respect and uphold the treaties that govern this land. These include Treaty 13, signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. We also recognize the enduring relevance of the 'Dish with One Spoon' wampum agreement, a treaty between Indigenous nations in the Great Lakes region that binds the peoples who inhabit this land to share it well and protect it.



**We're a Canadian nonprofit with a mission to build evaluation and learning capacity.**

We offer:

- Research and evaluation services
- Monitoring, evaluation and learning systems
- Evaluation coaching and capacity building
- AI solutions for nonprofits

# About our co-founders (and us)



**Neil Price**

**Executive Director and Co-Founder**

Neil leads our team. As a researcher, he's drawn to projects that seek to advance equity through rigorous program evaluation and evidence-informed decision making, particularly with agencies serving Black youth and communities.



**Dr. Gillian Kerr**

**President Emerita and Co-Founder**

Gillian is an evaluator and organizational psychologist with deep experience in the nonprofit sector. She provides research, systems analysis and ongoing leadership in the field of AI solutions for nonprofits.



**Sophie Llewelyn**

**Director of Evaluation**

Sophie leads evaluations, facilitates training in evaluation, and designs and manages systems that support nonprofits to capture their impact and improve their effectiveness.



**Medha Aurora**

**Evaluation Analyst**

Medha has a background in developmental psychology and mixed-methods research. She manages and contributes to evaluations and AI solutions for nonprofits.



# What we'll cover today:

1. Our goals for the workshop
2. Why nonprofits should collect social identity data
3. Recognizing data harm
4. Understanding data equity
5. Equity through the data life cycle
6. Priorities for the planning stage:
  - Data governance
  - Community engagement
7. Tools and resources





# 1. Our goals:

1. Orient nonprofits to the concept of data equity.
2. Advance a culture of collecting, analyzing, using and sharing data in an equitable way.
3. Recommend tools that can support nonprofits to plan and implement equitable data projects.
4. Reflect and collaborate with peers in the nonprofit sector.

## 2. Why nonprofits should collect social identity data

George Saunders - *“To behave honorably requires that we be in contact with the truth, to be able to supply honest answers to simple questions.”*

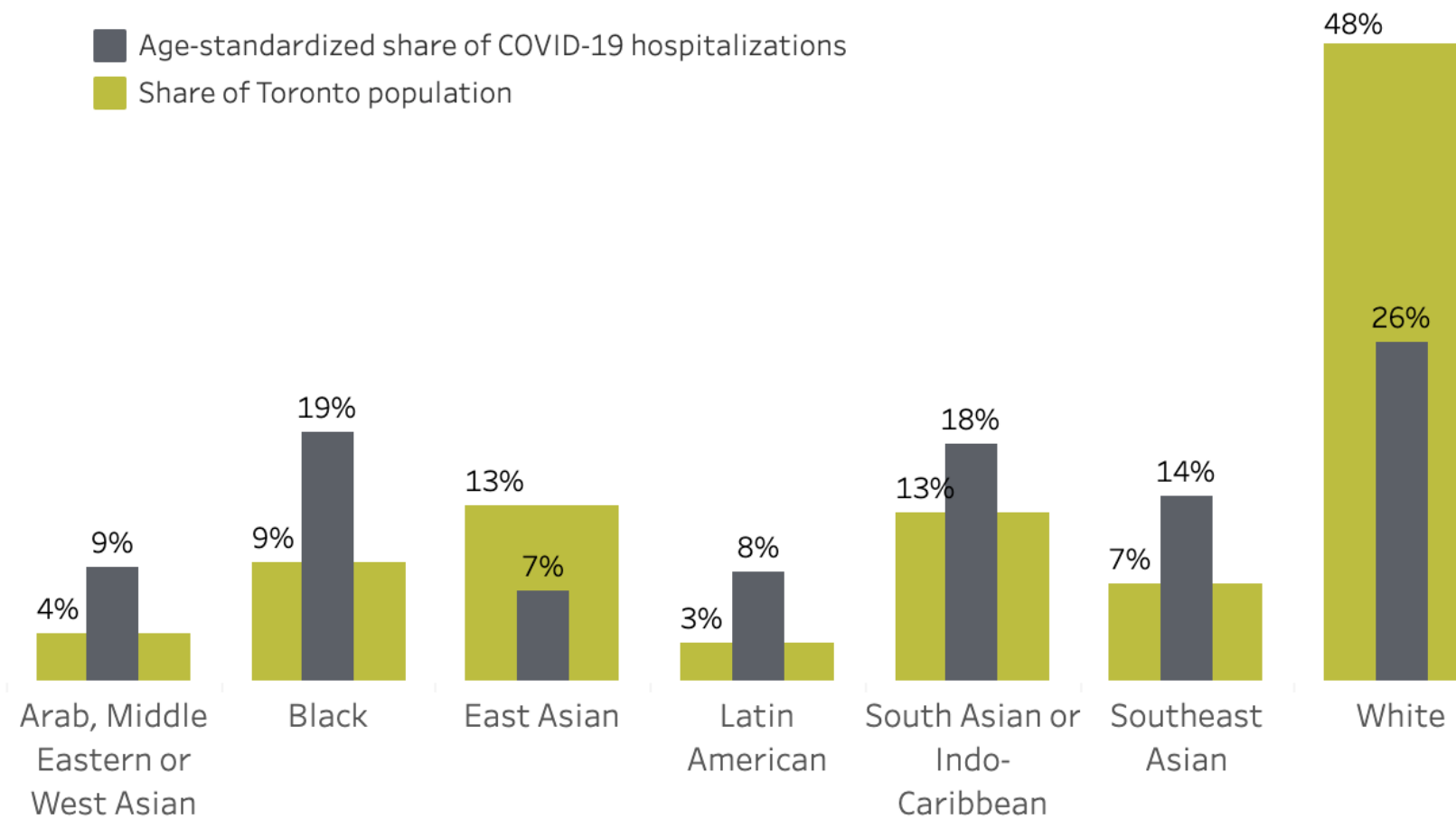
- Who uses our services?
- Who might face barriers to access?
- Who is benefitting most from our programs?
- Who could we serve better and how?



Share of COVID-19 age-standardized hospitalizations among ethno-racial groups compared to the share of people living in Toronto, with valid data up to December 31, 2021 (N=5,505)

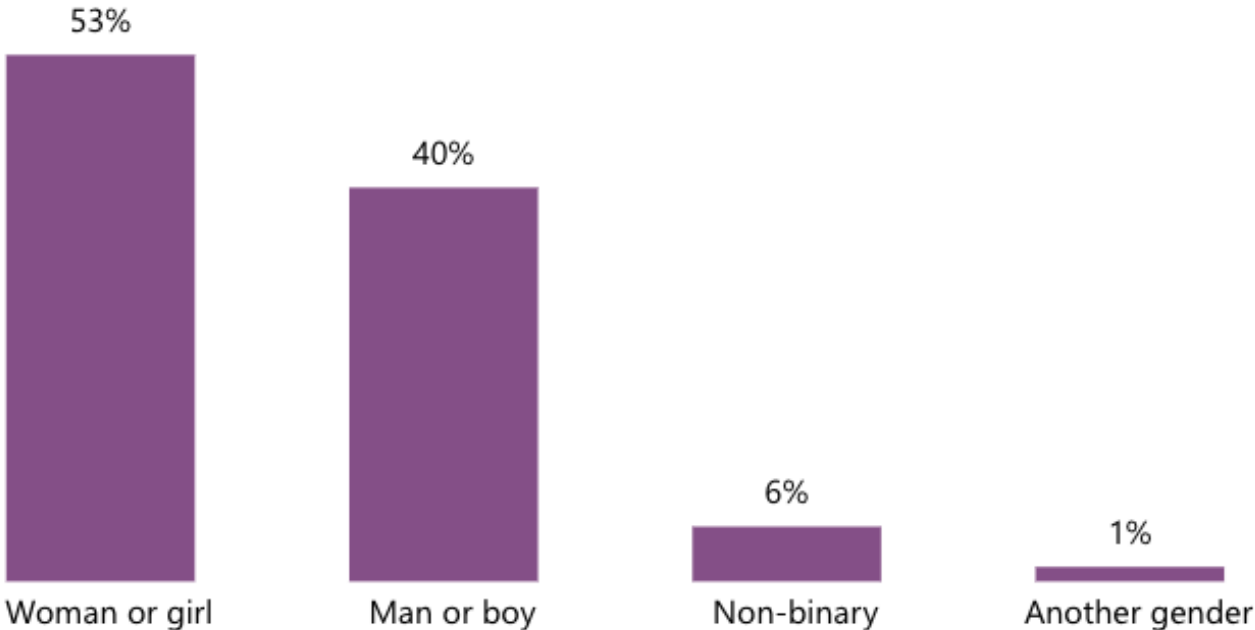
Select Graph:

- ☐ Cases
- ☐ Hospitalizations
- ☒ Age-standardized Hospitalizations



**Which groups are most impacted by COVID-19? Who should we include in our outreach, prevention, and support strategies, to ensure more equitable health outcomes?**

Respondent gender distribution



Man or boy	2462 (40%)
Woman or girl	3291 (53%)
Non-binary	343 (6%)
Another gender	91 (1%)

How true are our assumptions about service user identities? How do we ensure that everyone feels welcome and included?

### 3. Recognizing data harm

We know that data projects are never politically neutral. They are always wrapped up in power relations.

Equitable data projects start by recognizing that people with more privilege often get to decide how to collect, analyze, and use data, while people with less privilege rarely have choice in how their data is collected, stored or shared.

Too often, data projects have been used as a tool to extract information from people – especially Black, Indigenous, and racialized people – for the purposes of domination and control.

## When nonprofits collect data, they expose their staff and the people they serve to risk of harm:

- Exposing data to **mishandling and misuse** (using people's data are used for a purpose to which they do not consent)
- **Disrespectful** data collection processes that expose people to upsetting questions and experiences
- **Unjust** processes that concentrate the risks and burden of data collection among one group (service users, frontline workers), while the benefits flow elsewhere (funders, leadership)

## **What can nonprofits do in the planning stage to:**

- **Mitigate risks**
- **Contribute to positive processes and outcomes for all?**





## 4. Understanding data equity

Principles and practices to guide data work through a lens of diversity, justice, equity, and inclusivity\*.

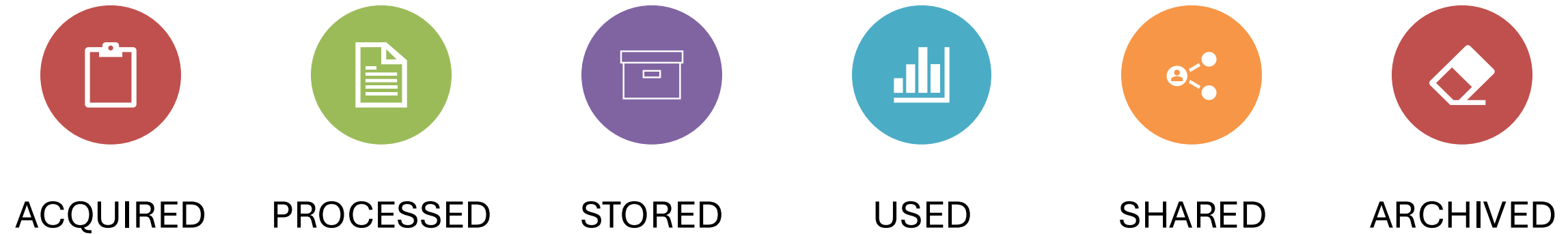
A data equity lens can help nonprofits to:

- Better perceive the assumptions, interests and power relations that inform data projects
- Adopt practices that lead to positive experiences and equitable outcomes for the people involved



# The data life cycle

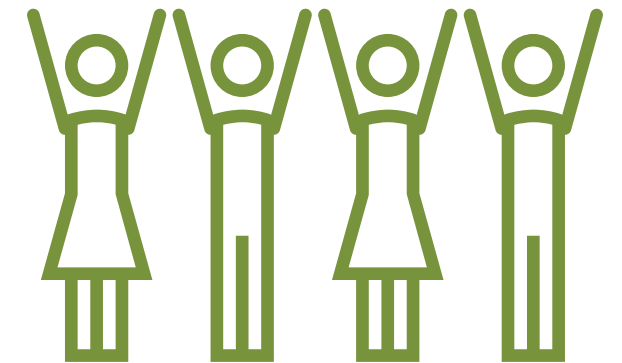
The data lifecycle is a systematic approach to managing information throughout its useful life within an organization. It encompasses how data is:



## 5. Equity through the data life cycle

Each stage of the data life cycle provides an opportunity to pursue an equitable, community-centered approach to data, by:

- Maximizing participant benefits and minimizing risks
- Ensuring respect for people and communities
- Promoting justice at every stage



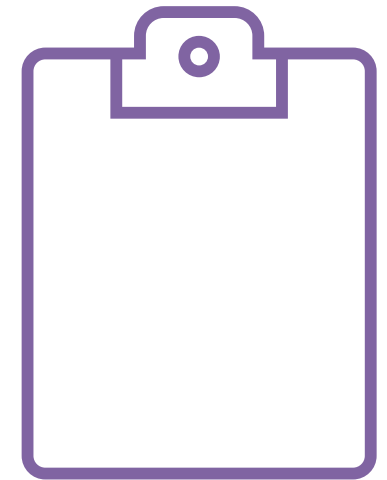
# Equity in planning

- Create a data governance plan.
- Engage community in articulating data project design:
  - Research purpose and questions
  - Methods/processes/tools for data collection
  - Approach to data analysis, reporting, sharing results
- Be aware of how sensitive topics can affect people and communities. Ensure that benefits to community outweigh risks.
- Adhere to privacy regulations and data governance frameworks for Indigenous and Black communities.



# Equity in instrument design

- Avoid unnecessary collection of PII.
- Reduce risk of identification/re-identification:
  - Demographics
  - Open text
- Prioritize accessibility (language and design).
- Use systems and practices that protect privacy.
- Choose short, strengths-based measures.
- Consider qualitative/participatory methods.
- Pilot with community; tweak based on feedback.



# Equity in data collection

- Avoid undue burden.
- Use unobtrusive approaches where possible.
- Leverage existing touchpoints to reduce burden.
- Start with clear consent protocols.
- Consider incentives/honoraria.
- Build in time to troubleshoot and pivot.



# Equity in analysis and reporting

## Data analysis and visualization

- Engage community members in sense-making.
- Be transparent about the limits of the data.

## Data reporting and sharing

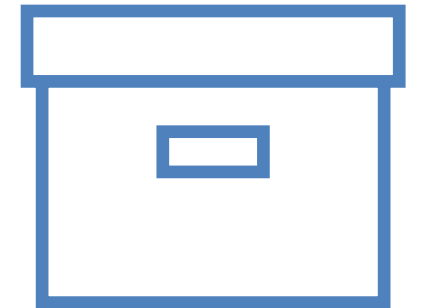
- Carefully consider and mitigate potential harms.
- Share anonymized datasets with the sector to reduce duplicate data collection.
- Return datasets and research results to community in a form they can use.





# Equity in archiving and deletion

- Empower people to request destruction of their data.
- Be transparent about plans for data after project conclusion.
- Don't just keep the data forever.
- Create systems and procedures that support follow-through.



## 6. Priorities for the planning stage

**a) Data governance** – Policies and procedures that ensure data is usable, accessible, protected, and handled in a way that is responsible, compliant, and mission-aligned.

**b) Community engagement** – Actions to meaningfully include community members in decision making throughout the data life cycle.



# Data governance

## CAN/DGSI 100-11:2025

### Data Governance Standard for Delivery of Community and Human Services

- Prepared by DGSI Technical Committee on Data Governance and drafting team with SMEs from ONN, OTF, Common Approach to Impact Measurement, CMHA, CCNDR, and NB-IRDT.
- Specifies minimum requirements for the responsible and privacy-preserving collection, access, use, sharing and storage of personal information by organisations delivering community and human services.



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# Check out the checklist

## 1. Governance & Oversight

- ☐ Assign a designated Data Governance Lead or committee.
- ☐ Develop a Data Governance Plan outlining policies and responsibilities.
- ☐ Integrate equity principles for inclusive and responsible data governance and oversight.

## 2. Data Collection

- ☐ Obtain informed consent from individuals before collecting their data.
- ☐ Define clear objectives for data collection to minimize unnecessary information.
- ☐ Use secure, ethical, and inclusive collection methods.
- ☐ Provide transparency on how data will be used, stored, and shared.

# Develop and implement a data governance plan

- ✓ Create a project team.
- ✓ Review the Standard.
- ✓ Use the checklist to assess compliance and identify gaps.
- ✓ Consider an audit of current data systems/practices.
- ✓ Look for good examples of privacy policies elsewhere.
- ✓ Draft your own policies and procedures; check that they align with privacy regulations and governance frameworks.
- ✓ Share with colleagues and community for feedback, revise.
- ✓ Train and implement.
- ✓ Monitor processes and outcomes.
- ✓ Celebrate successes; respond to issues as they arise.
- ✓ Stay abreast of emerging risks, trends, technologies; revisit and enhance your plan over time.

# Community engagement

Plan to engage community members as partners in measurement processes:

- Create a community advisory group (or approach an existing one).
- Consult with community members about appropriate language and categories for data collection tools.
- Build/adopt systems that provide opportunities for individual choice and control.
- Engage community members in interpretation and sense-making.
- Compensate community members for their expertise and time.
- Share results back with community through town halls, posters, data walks, social media.





# City of Toronto Black Community Data Governance Framework (2024)

(A great example of a data governance framework that foregrounds community engagement at every stage of the data cycle)



# Tools and resources

## References in data standard

Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN) (2023). A Framework for Nonprofit Data Strategies.

<https://theonnn.ca/publication/deal-framework/>

First Nations Information Governance Centre. OCAP - <https://fnigc.ca/ocap-training/>

Global Indigenous Data Alliance. CARE principles - <https://www.gida-global.org/care>

Black Health Equity Working Group. EGAP framework - <https://blackhealthequity.ca/>

City of Toronto Black Community Data Governance Framework

<https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/956f-City-of-Toronto-Final-BCDG-Framework-Final-2024-AODA-May-10.pdf>

National Association of Friendship Centres - National Data Strategy

<https://nafc.ca/departments/data/national-data-strategy?lang=en>

# More tools and resources

Data.org. Planning for a data strategy - <https://data.org/guides/how-to-align-an-organization-to-define-a-data-strategy/>

Urban Institute. Principles for advancing data equity - [https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/102346/principles-for-advancing-equitable-data-practice\\_0.pdf](https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/102346/principles-for-advancing-equitable-data-practice_0.pdf)

PIPEDA principles - [https://www.priv.gc.ca/en/privacy-topics/privacy-laws-in-canada/the-personal-information-protection-and-electronic-documents-act-pipeda/p\\_principle/](https://www.priv.gc.ca/en/privacy-topics/privacy-laws-in-canada/the-personal-information-protection-and-electronic-documents-act-pipeda/p_principle/)

StatCan data literacy training - <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/wtc/data-literacy>

Data maturity assessments

- <https://data.org/guides/how-to-prioritize-efforts-when-strengthening-an-organizations-data-maturity/>
- <https://www.datacamp.com/report/datacamp-data-maturity-assessment>
- TechSoup digital assessment - <https://assessment.techsoup.org/>

We All Count's Data Equity Framework: <https://weallcount.com/the-data-process/>

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