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Background

- ★ Promise Neighborhoods of the Lehigh Valley, Lehigh University and Lehigh Valley Health Network developed Health Equity Action and Research Team (HEART) to **eliminate structural racism, and foster health equity and community resilience** during and beyond the COVID-19 crisis
- ★ Bridging the Gaps Community Health Internship Program (BTG), links the provision of health-related service for under resourced communities with interprofessional training of health and social service professionals through paid interdisciplinary community immersion internships in PA and NJ.
- ★ HEART sponsored remote internships for 6 interdisciplinary health professions BTG interns during Summer 2020 to promote structural competency and prepare learners to address inequities

Fellowship Objectives

- ★ Develop basic understanding of social determinants of health, health equity, and community based participatory research
- ★ Learn to incorporate self-reflective practices, deep listening, and collective impact framework in professional work
- ★ Value and recognize the leadership of community context experts and community organizations in addressing health equity
- ★ Appreciate from the point of view of community context experts the impact of clinician bias, structural racism and historical discriminatory practices
- ★ Contribute to organizational and community capacity building through community action project
- ★ Build resilience and relationships that offer support, mentoring and healing to navigate their health professions training

What Our Interns Say

Valuing the expertise of the community context

- *"Listening to the community. This is a big one. It seems obvious in hindsight and it is something that is taught but not really put into practice. What they want and need and acting on that. That was the biggest takeaway for me, seeing it done."*
- *"The community, the people with the lived experiences, those who have the clout to show that these are the needs and why stuff needs to be changed are the most important component. The data and statistics need to go hand hand with the stories and lived experiences of community members."*

Taking Action

- *"For a while, I felt pressured to leave where I grew up, which is in Allentown. But after this internship, I feel more connected to my community and it will feel wrong for me to know all the challenges people are facing just 10 mins from me and it will feel wrong to leave. I feel like I can make a difference and my community needs me."*
- *"To me, what I have learned boils down to one simple phrase: silence is violence. I will have RN next to my name soon and I will be working for and representing a system I am not proud of. This was the perfect time for me to think about my core values about how I will make a difference. I know it will be hard, but I have to focus on advocating and sticking to my core values. I hope that I can be an example and encourage other health care professionals to do the same."*

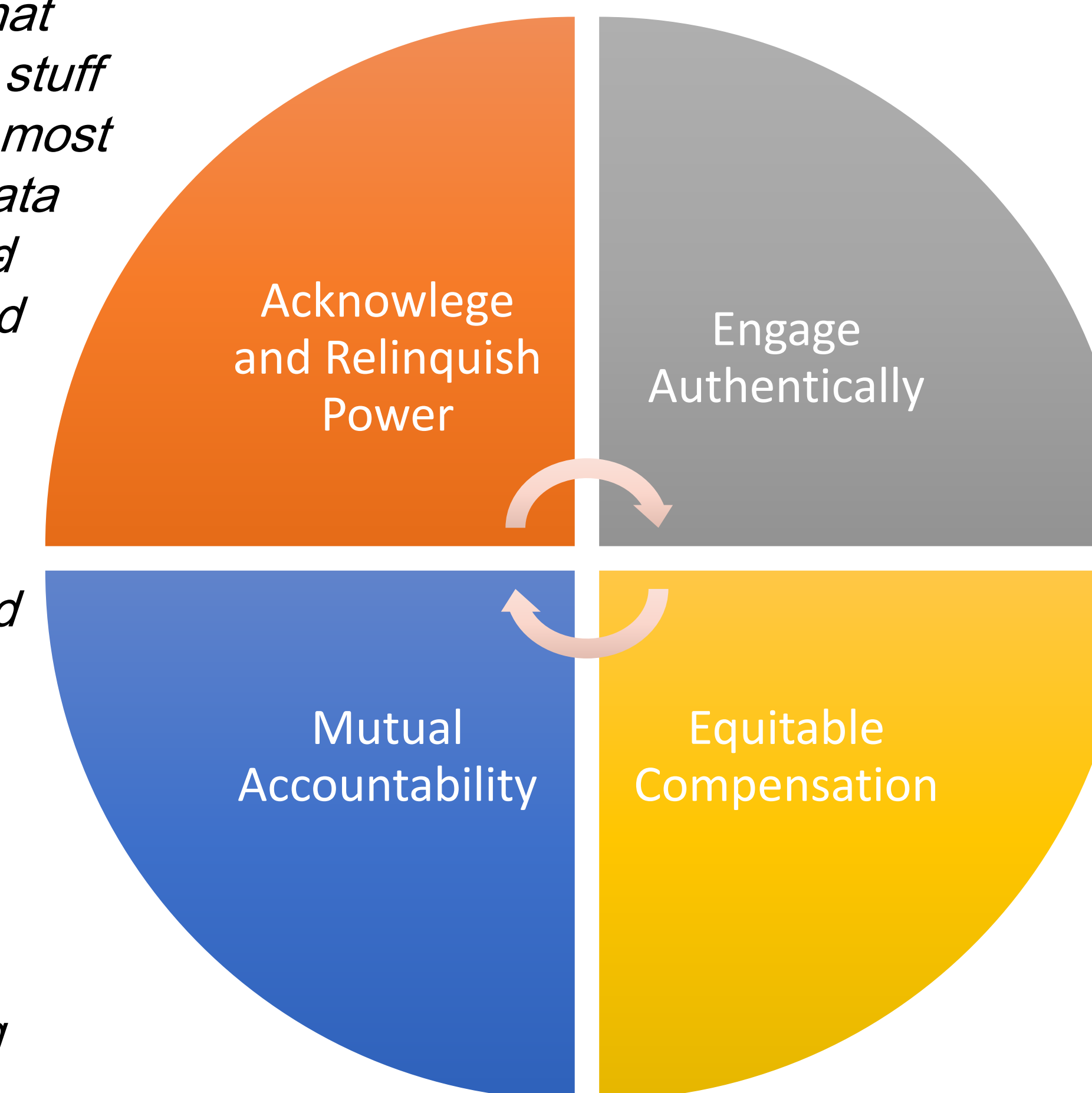
Self Reflection

- *"The staff challenged intern perspectives on racism. We were talking about our research and articles we had looked at and our community preceptor asked us how many of the articles were by Black people and we hadn't even thought about it, and how important it is to get these voices in research."*

- *"It made it possible for me to sit with uncomfortable topics and to express how uncomfortable I felt. I learned how to actively listen and hear things that aren't necessarily said."*

Understanding Social Determinants of Health and Structural Racism

- *"This internship has helped me see how racism is embedded in every aspect of society and how it has an effect on healthcare and quality of care. There needs to be more education for healthcare professionals about structural racism"*
- *"The social determinants of health for me now is about policies and bias. Laws put in place that can be used as a tool to keep others down."*



Fellowship Activities

- ★ **Virtual Story Gathering** : By sharing stories together, emerging content experts (interns) and context experts (community members) learned advocacy and empathy as foundation for authentic trusting relationships that fuel collaborative change.
- ★ **The Health Disparities Impact Webinar Series** Weekly webinars with local content (professional) and context (lived experience) expertise engaged students and community in dialog:
 - Radical Welcome
 - Social Determinants of Health/Health Equity
 - Addiction, Recovery and Substance Abuse
 - Youth Violence as a Contagious Disease, Root Causes & C
 - Food Justice: Dismantling the Apartheid Food System
 - Managing Chronic Disease in Community
 - Countering the Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys/Interrupting the School to Prison Pipeline
 - The House we Live In/The Need for Affordable Housing
- ★ **Community Action Project Workgroups**: Group projects designed for remote collaboration engaged interns in real world health equity as community health and action research,
 - Developed online learning modules on the topics of Cultural Competency in Healthcare, Housing Access, and Social Isolation during a Pandemic for community learning platform,
 - Provided literature review for discussion and white paper on police brutality in Allentown.
- ★ **Bridging the Gaps Greater Philadelphia** Interns participated in weekly curricular virtual zoom sessions with the greater Philadelphia BTG interns and faculty.