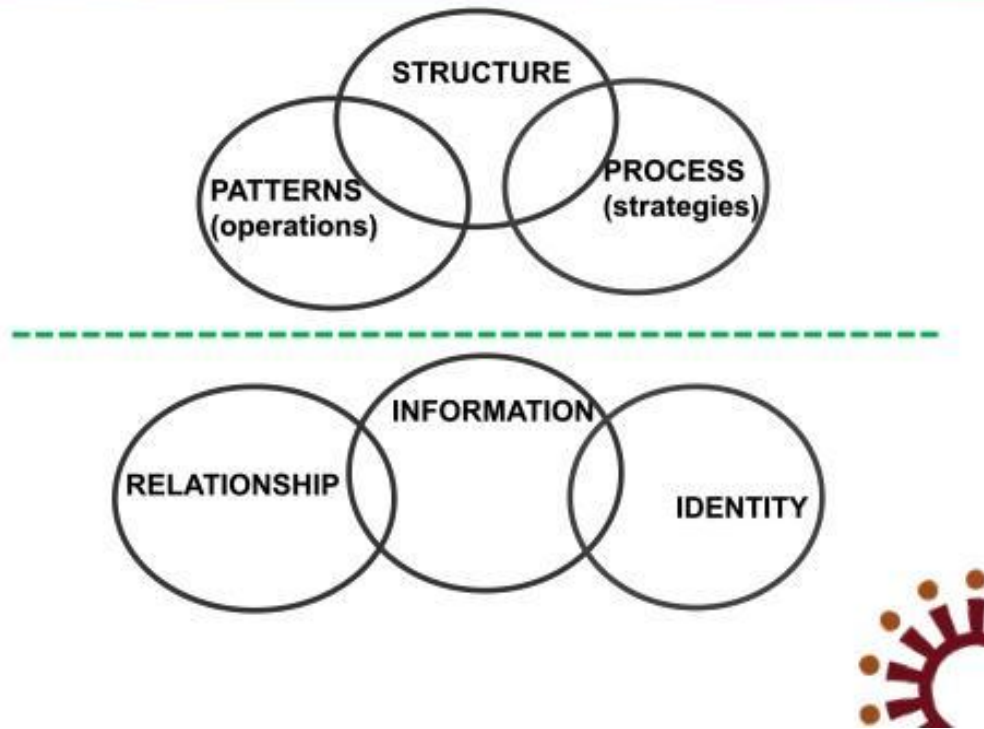


# Leading for Equity

The art of navigating and leading in complex systems

## 6 Circle Model



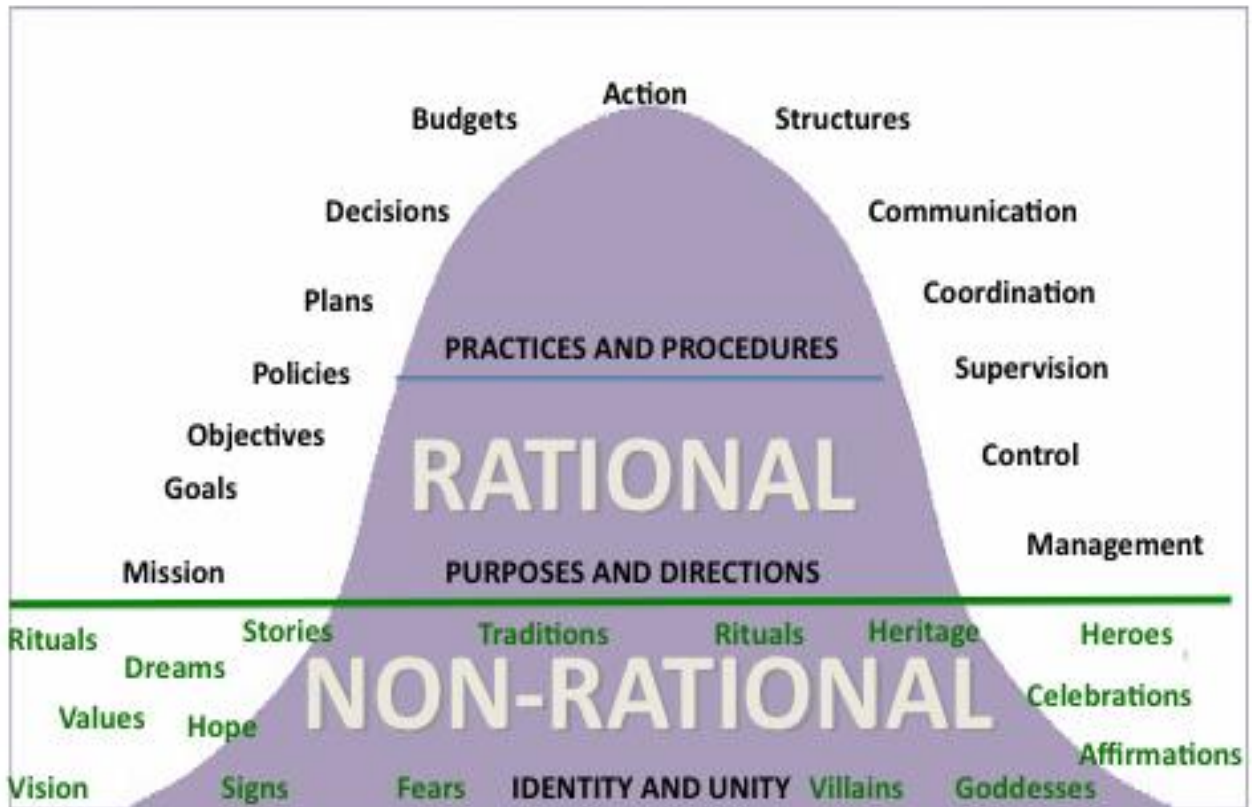
The Six-Circle Model was developed by Margaret Wheatley and Tim Dalmau, 1983.

As a leader for educational equity, conversations are inhabited by what is below as well as what is above the “**Green Line**.” Around and within all these conversations information is exchanged, shared meaning is developed and mediated, agendas modified and adapted lined to the values, and visions of school and district policies and to the structure, plan and process. These do not primarily just happen in a strategic or technical dimension above the “Green Line”. Below the “Green Line” reside beliefs and values, both individual and organizational, which evolve from assumptions, feelings and emotions; individual roles, ambitions and aspirations, organizational visions and the psychological histories of individuals and organizations.

In the Six-Circle Model all six circles are important to creating organizational success. In the past the greatest amount of explicit attention has been focused on the top three circles. Working within this framework allows us to see the critical and interdependent impacts of people as reflected by the bottom three circles. *This is especially true as groups seek to understand how bias, conscious and unconscious may be impacting teaching and learning at the individual, institutional and structural levels.*

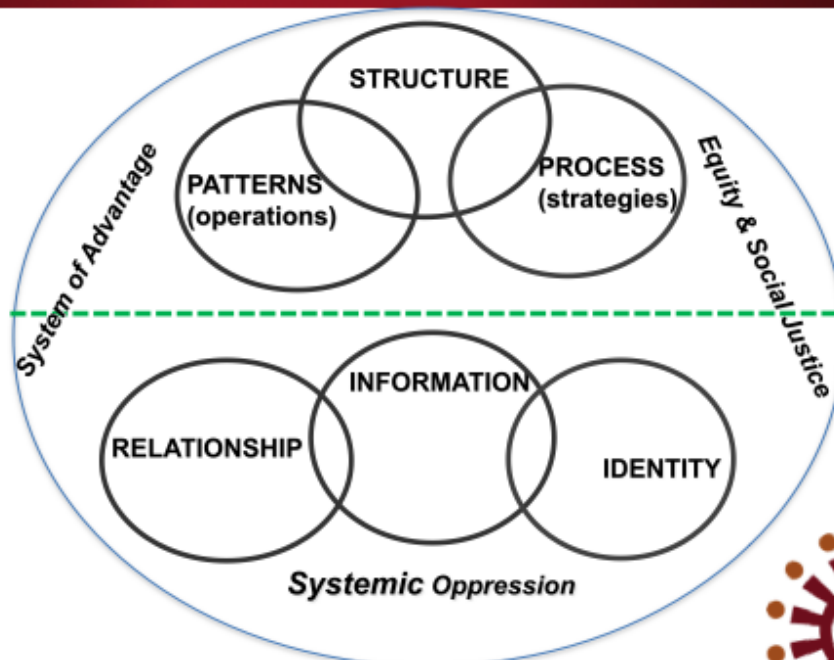
**Groups of people who establish a culture that values the work “below the green line” can self-organize to identify and implement the above the green line strategies and the infrastructure to achieve powerful and creative results.**

## Detailed view of Above and Below Green Line



At the National Equity Project, we believe that the six-circle model can also be envisioned as a seven-circle model. This model recognizes that systemic oppression exists and negatively affects the dynamic interplay of people working above and below the green line. As a leader for equity the 7circle model expands upon what we see that may be reproducing inequity instead of increasing opportunities for transformative outcomes for students.

### 7 Circle Model





## WHAT'S ABOVE THE GREEN LINE?

STRUCTURE	
What is it?	What does it look like?
The structure of a system can describe how the parts are organized and situated in relation to one another. It can include the frameworks and “containers” within which the work of the system is done.	Examples are org charts and reporting structures, master schedules, meeting schedules, strategic plans

PATTERN	
What is it?	What does it look like?
Patterns in the system describe the recurring results, messages and phenomena, both intended and unintended.	Turnover, absenteeism, achievement,

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*At this time in our history, we are in great need of processes that can help us weave ourselves back together. We've lost confidence in our great human capabilities, partly because mechanistic organizational processes have separated and divided us, and made us fearful and distrusting of one another. We need processes to help us reweave connections, to discover shared interests, to listen to one another's stories and dreams. We need processes that take advantage of our natural ability to network, to communicate when something is meaningful to us. We need processes that invite us to participate, that honor our creativity and commitment to the organization.*

*– Margaret Wheatley*

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PROCESS	
What is it?	What does it look like?
Processes are the ways in which things get done in the system.	They can be the steps laid out in a strategic plan; they might be how hiring happens, the evaluation and promotion process, or the process for decision making.

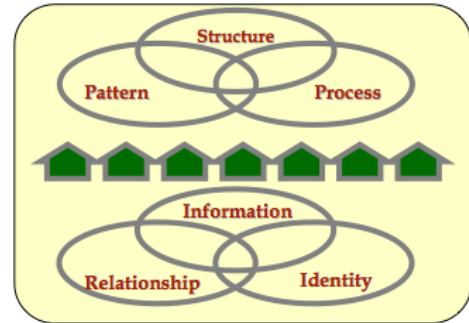
*If an organization and its structures are to be instruments for the humanization and liberation of its members, the power operative in a system cannot be coercive power, which is based on fear of sanctions. Nor can it even be simply reward power which is based on the anticipation of some return for one's involvement. Ultimately it must involve the kind of power which comes from people freely choosing to engage themselves in efforts to achieve a goal which they themselves have freely adopted. This power of free persons is called commitment. –John Sherwood*



## WORKING BELOW THE GREEN LINE

At this time in our history, we are in great need of processes that can help us weave ourselves back together. We've lost confidence in our great human capabilities, partly because mechanistic organizational processes have separated and divided us, and made us fearful and distrusting of one another. We need processes to help us reweave connections, to discover shared interests, to listen to one another's stories and dreams. We need processes that take advantage of our natural ability to network, to communicate when something is meaningful to us. We need processes that invite us to participate, that honor our creativity and commitment to the organization. – Margaret Wheatley

Wheatley



### WHAT'S BELOW THE GREEN LINE?

INFORMATION	
What is it?	What does it look like?
Information is like oxygen in a system. In its absence, people will “make it up” in an effort to keep moving forward. Access to information greatly minimizes the negative rumors that can occur within organizations.	This looks like multiple forms of two-way communication, repeating messages more than once in multiple ways, allowing opportunity to co-construct understanding and meaning rather than always being “told” or “given” information.

RELATIONSHIPS	
What is it?	What does it look like?
People need to have open relationships with the people they work with, trusted relationships that lead to commitment and powerful work getting done. Relationships occur not only between people, but between programs, departments, and organizations (think connections).	This looks like intentional time being dedicated to establishing, growing, and repairing trust. It means investing in the skills and capacities for honest and productive conversations. It means leaders model the way by extending trust first.

*If you don't have trust how do you get it? Let me provide an odd-sounding answer from our motion leadership work (Fullan, 2010b). If you want to break the cycle of distrust you have to respect others 'before they have earned the right to be respected' ... and then do the things that build competencies and trust over time. – Michael Fullan*

IDENTITY	
What is it?	What does it look like?
Human beings are meaning-seekers. Our actions are completely driven by our own set of values, beliefs and sense of identity. Therefore, finding meaning and value in our work motivates people to work together in organizations.	This looks like repeated opportunities for self-reflection and connecting personal beliefs and values to the mission and vision of the organization. It means being reminded of why we come to work every day, what's most important to us in our work, and finding ways to stay true to ourselves in the midst of competing commitments.