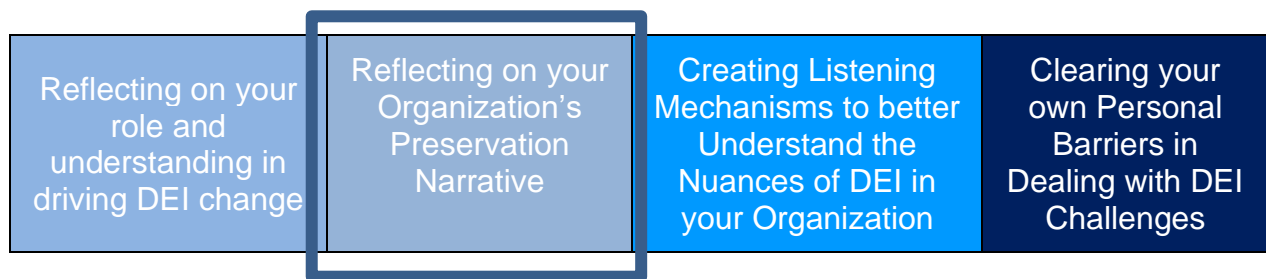




Leadership and Governance Toolkit

Tool 5: Understanding and Changing the Preservation Narrative in your Organization

FIGURE 6: TOOLS TO UNDERSTAND YOUR ORGANIZATION'S DEI CONTEXT – PRESERVATION NARRATIVE



Preservation narratives exist in all organizations. They exist at the individual level when we only see credibility in those like us – who are the same as us. Preservation exists at the systemic level, where systems and processes are designed to favour some groups over others.

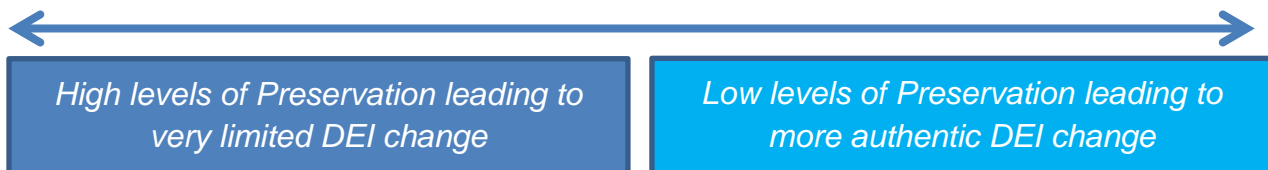
Fighting preservation narratives is neither easy nor straightforward. The toolkit provides leaders with two tools to understand and begin counteracting their organization's preservation narrative.

Most successful organizations, including OLIP member organizations, benefit from programs and systems that enable them to achieve their raison d'être. Through these systems, these organizations effectively and efficiently create value for their key beneficiaries; this is a key set of assets for the organization. Leaders are vested in keeping these systems the same and not altering these value-creating systems. Sometimes this is due to the performance of these systems and other times, especially for non-profit and community-based organizations, this is due to a lack of financial resources and expertise to conceptualize and implement change. The resulting force

that keeps things the same in organizations is known as preservation, which poses challenges to DEI. Leaders have different approaches to taking action when finding a balance between DEI and preservation. See Figure 7 for a continuum of actions that can change the preservation narrative in your organization.

FIGURE 7: CONTINUUM OF CHANGE: CHANGING THE PRESERVATION NARRATIVE IN YOUR ORGANIZATION

DENIAL	WORDS	PLANS	FOCUS ON BIAS	FOCUS ON SYSTEMS
Leaders acknowledge that DEI matters but are unwilling to change anything around their core systems that have allowed them to deliver value traditionally.	DEI work occurs in the form of discussions and statements of commitment in HR policies and strategic plans.	DEI work includes the development of Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression Policies and/or a DEI Strategy.	Most initiatives around changing the DEI context are about training people to be more aware and less biased.	Planning, funding, and implementation resources are allocated to reviewing systems, changing systems, and implementing programs, processes, and structures to improve DEI.



If leadership teams find their DEI-related work is more about preservation than change, the only way to change this is to focus on action. This could include: (1) investing in consultation resources to help develop an Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Policy, (2) developing a DEI strategy that aligns with the organization's overall strategy, (3) investing in quality, in-person training that doesn't just focus on educating people about DEI, but that actually allows them to explore their biases and avenues for change in a highly engaging context, (4) invest in scenario-based training tailored to your organization's DEI challenges so managers have the opportunity to build capacity in

dealing with actual DEI challenges in their organizations, and (5) invest in reviewing longstanding core systems from a DEI lens, and work to ensure people resourcing, funding resources, and leadership support resources are in line to support large scale change. In non-profit and community-based organizations, few slack resources are available to invest in areas such as DEI. Therefore, leaders must be creative in finding resources. This can include (1) sharing the cost of consultation resources with an organization facing similar DEI challenges, (2) creating a community of practice made up of members from different organizations who come together to develop solutions based interventions, and (3) evaluating the organization's current set of program and resource allocations to see if some resources could be leveraged more impactfully by focusing on DEI. Leaders must also be prepared to advocate for resources. The leadership teams and Boards for many community-based organizations have not invested in DEI initiatives. The organizational routines or systems that support this kind of investment are not in place and therefore DEI leaders must be highly prepared for these resource-based conversations leveraging information about both impact and costs.