

How to Use this Resource

This resource is meant to help you move to action and incorporate Design Thinking for Design Justice in the pursuit of Health Equity.

For more context on DTDJ

To get the most out of this resource, P4HE recommends reviewing the level setting resources participants were provided during this workshop sprint. For more background information on Design Thinking for Design Justice (DTDJ) see [Approaches for Health Equity: Design Thinking for Design Justice](#).

Level Setting

New to DTDJ? Below are level setting resources recommended by the workshop facilitator.

Read

- › [Introduction to Design Justice](#)
- › [“Living Freedom through the Maroon Landscape”](#)
- › [“Refusing Unlivable Destinies”](#)
- › [“New Orleans artists trained as health workers to combat 25-year life expectancy gap in Black communities”](#)
- › [“Q&A with Nupur Chaudhury of Dark Matter University”](#)
- › [“Black Future Heritage Spaces”](#)

Listen

- › [The Move Podcast, episode: “Human Centered Border Wall”](#)
- › [TriPod podcast, episode “More than a Runaway: Maroons in Louisiana”](#)

Watch

- › [Justice in Public Health: Design Justice](#)
- › [“Dead in the Water: A New Origins Story for Public Health”](#)
- › [“Designing Futures for Health and Justice”](#)

Workshop Focus

The Partners for Advancing Health Equity Collaborative hosted a three-series workshop sprint on Design Thinking for Design Justice (DTDJ), led by Chris Daemmrich.

- › **Session 1:** “Unjust By Design” introduced the concepts of Design Thinking and Design Justice.
- › **Session 2:** “In the Swamp” discussed the roots of DTDJ, providing examples of contexts that inform unjust systems, and questions for defining problems ideating solutions.
- › **Session 3:** “Preferable Futures,” outlined the concept of preferable futures and the design thinking practice of speculative design, through real-life examples.

Moving to Action

Below, we’ve summarized ways to use Design Thinking for Design Justice approaches to disrupt traditional research approaches.



› Ask “How might we…” Questions

“How might we…” questions are a technique for problem definition. These questions help us to move toward the “ideation” or “experimental action” phase of the Design Thinking process. The [Equity-Centered Community Design Thinking Process](#) includes this phase. “How might we…” questions can help us create boundaries and set intentions. “How might we…” questions can be framed as a pair of two opposing questions such as: What are you working for? and What are you working against? Examples of “How might we…” questions include:

- › How might we design health programs which affirm Black life in New Orleans?
- › How might we design health programs which resist the “death dealing” of racial capitalism?

› A “How might we…” Case Study

[The Phillis Wheatley Club](#) of New Orleans was a group of Black New Orleans clubwomen in 1894 who defined problems. Income restrictions prevented poor Black patients from accessing care at segregated, White-run Charity Hospital, and Jim Crow policies designed by racist White physicians in 1877 barred Black doctors from working at White hospitals. Examples of “How might we…” questions for this case study include:

- › How might we improve access to healthcare for Black New Orleanians who have low or no income?
- › How might we oppose Jim Crow denial of medical training opportunities for Black doctors in New Orleans?

› Ask “What if…” Questions (Speculative Design)

[Speculative design](#) is a form of design thinking practice based around questions of “what if?”. As with other design thinking tools, we can use speculative design to uphold the unjust status quo or to advance justice and equity. This allows for viewers to relate the scenario to their world and to use it as an aid for critical reflection.” Examples of frameworks and real-world applications of speculative design include:

- › [Black Future Heritage Spaces workshop](#) led by Ladipo Famodu
- › [Afrofuturism](#)
- › [Further Considerations on Afrofuturism](#) by Kodwo Eshun.
- › [Billboard by Alisha B. Wormsley](#)
- › [Republica map created by V. Mitch McEwen and Kristin Kay Robinson](#)
- › [Tate, Etienne, Prevost \(TEP\) Center](#)
- › [Billboard by Alisha B. Wormsley](#)



- › [A Reconstruction project on Leland University](#) in New Orleans by workshop speaker Chris Daemmrich

› A Speculative Design Case Study

In May 1989, [Sun Ra](#) and his Arkestra at A.P. Tureaud Elementary [performed the Space Chant Medley](#), a school that closed during Hurricane Katrina. Examples of “What if…” questions for the closure of A.P. Tureaud elementary school include:

- › What if the permanent closure of a historic Black public school was politically unacceptable?
- › What if we found new uses that honor the histories of all of our closed public schools?

› Try it out: Designing “Preferable Futures”

One way to practice DTDJ approaches is through discussing “preferable futures” scenarios and working through ways to apply the Design Justice Principles and the BlackSpace Principles, though the frameworks of Black Ecologies and Blues Epistemologies. Examples of questions to explore include:

- › How might we make this future possible?
- › How might we make this future plausible?
- › How might we make this future probable?
- › What will need to change in order to achieve our preferable futures?
- › What histories will we draw on to achieve our preferable futures?
- › What questions remain unanswered?

Try out DTDJ through working through example preferable futures. Examples of scenarios:

- › **Preferable Future #1:** What if we eliminate the 25-year gap in life expectancy between residents in Black neighborhoods and White neighborhoods in [location]? Describe a day in a future New Orleans where this has happened. What is different? What is the same?
- › **Preferable Future #2:** What if all pregnant women in the Deep South who want to bear a child can survive pregnancy, and give birth to healthy children? Describe a day in a future town or city where this has happened. What is different? What is the same?
- › **Preferable Future #3:** What if every public school student in the United States received free, high-quality mental healthcare through their schools? Describe a day in a future in the place where you live where this has happened. What is different? What is the same?

