

OUR HISTORY

In the United States, the business landscape often struggles to adopt a people-centered approach, leading employees at all levels to grapple with burnout, mental health challenges, apathy, and a lack of agency over their lives. At HTE, we focus on how these issues disproportionately affect marginalized populations, drawing on insights from historical justice advocacy.

Since our founding in 2021, Dr. Nicole Johnson has combined her expertise in post-emancipation economics with the current struggles faced by marginalized groups. She highlights the parallels between these experiences: both have encountered a scarcity of resources, unfulfilled promises, and a lack of acknowledgment for their unique lived realities. Dr. Johnson's previous work as an artist in the New York theater community provided her with a firsthand understanding of how these challenges adversely affect marginalized workers in the arts.

At the time of HTE's inception, crucial resources to support arts workers—such as time, health, and knowledge—were often lacking or inadequate. Consequently, marginalized employees in theater organizations sought HTE as a unique haven and resource. This referral-based system allowed us to support these individuals and gain valuable insights into their specific challenges.

By gathering data from employees at over 45 theatrical institutions through testimonials and both qualitative and quantitative research, we have addressed their experiences of disassociation, trauma, and gaslighting in the workplace with solution-oriented approaches. These include personal coaching, mentorship, and digital resources for all organizational members.

Through deeper engagement with these individuals and understanding their journeys toward self-determination, we recognized their need for resources in areas such as time wealth, social wealth, financial wealth, and health wealth. This insight enabled HTE to design programs aimed at enhancing their quality of life. We believe these tools can be applied across various industries, and their development within the theater community enhances their effectiveness, as theater epitomizes collaboration.

Our research demonstrates that for any industry to thrive and contribute effectively to American society, there must be support systems in place for those who contribute to our workplaces. To heal and recover from past harms, we must transform our workplace relationships. The future can indeed be different, but it requires us to shift our paradigm by developing tools for improved communication and radical empathy. The intersection of past wounds and future promises lies at the core of HTE. Welcome.