



TIPS FOR BUILDING A WHITE LEARNING COMMUNITY

LOGISTICS

- Have a facilitator, agenda, and note-taker for your more "formal" meetings
- Schedule your meetings many months in advance
- Keep the group size relatively small (under 10)
- Create a time commitment (e.g., 8 months) and re-evaluate at the end of each cycle
- Establish a ground rule re: commitment to attend meetings to support building continuity, understanding, and trust.
- Don't change the group membership once you get started (except at agreed-to intervals). A small group comprised of the same people who commit to x amount of time is more likely to progress than an ever-changing-someone-new-at-every-meeting kind of group.
- Define and document norms - including attendance expectations
- Make some kind of contact with group members at least monthly
- Use an email distribution list to communicate between meetings

CONTENT/PROCESS

- Choose your group name deliberately
- Be clear about your group's mission; use it constantly as a litmus test
- When the group forms (or re-forms, as new people enter), first take time to establish trust and a practice of supporting each other. The reality of our internal prejudices is difficult to admit and talk about. The support is important, if we expect folks to open up.
- Don't skimp on personal sharing - have check ins and check outs at every meeting
- In that supportive way, direct yourselves to the real hard questions.
- Don't expect the group to go deep immediately, it takes time to build trust and safety to talk about racism and privilege on a personal-level
- Once you do have trust, watch that check-in time doesn't consume most of the meeting!
- Often they're the tensions that are alive in the group, because this material is so charged, and we have so many strong feelings about what should or shouldn't be. Go there.
- Go deep regularly---don't stay at the surface or avoid the difficult discussions!
- Make room for cases (real life), content, and community
- Watch a tendency to be too structured
- Don't just have intellectual discussions – make room to share feelings, use physical movement
- Avoid having an "only" (e.g. only one White man)
- Observe, name, and discuss dynamics of white culture in the group, such as striving for control, power, silence, and guilt around race issues.
- Pay attention to resistance/conflict that shows up among group members (individual and group) - name it, be with it, and discuss it fully.
- Read books and article, watch films, etc., and discuss them, noting how dynamics in the books or resources show up in the group.



The Knapsack Group: A white learning community dedicated to uncovering, acknowledging, and confronting our own racism

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