



Resource Packet

Getting Started as a White Learning Partner

- Key understandings
- Partnering
- Focus on learning
- Black Voices
- Discomfort
- Informed action

Program Outline and Calendar

- Dates, Meeting Times
- Black Mentor
- Preparation

Working in Partnership

- Reciprocal mentoring
- Touchstones
- Guiding questions

Learning Plan Template

- What to include
- Strategies for choosing a focus for your plan

Resources for White Learning: Books and Media

Examples of individual learning plans

“Do not expect to be taught or shown. Take it upon yourself to use the tools around you to learn and answer your questions.” [Guide to Allyship](#)

Oct. 2022

Getting Started as a White Learning Partner

Welcome to the NAACP Berkshire County Branch White Learning Partners Program (WLP).

The program is intended to encourage and support you in your journey towards anti-racism and allyship whether you are a beginner or a seasoned traveler, by giving you ideas, resources, and personal connections with fellow travelers with whom to share the challenges and rewards of this journey.

Designed by white learners in consultation with Black Branch leadership, the program is built in the context of these “**Key Understandings:**”

- White people need to take responsibility for their own learning about whiteness and racism;
- Central to that learning are the voices of Black people as found in print and online publications, online sites, and through broadcast media;
- White people need to respect the degree to which Black people are exhausted by having to explain racism to white people and refrain from seeking out Black people for that purpose; white people need to do their own research before seeking out Black people for information.
- Learning can improve outcomes - reducing the daily race-based insults and micro-aggressions Black people experience from well-intentioned but uninformed white people;
- White people need to commit to a life time of learning and informed activism to counteract entrenched, persistent systemic racism and white supremacy and to recognize their own racist thinking and behavior.

You are **partnered** with 1-2 others who share your preference for partner meetings i.e. in-person, Zoom, or a combination of both. Therefore your geographical location is the key factor in creating your partnership unless your preference is for solely Zoom meetings.

Partnering with a friend is generally not recommended in order to encourage the discovery and curiosity that can emerge when engaging with a new individual.

You and your partner(s) are likely to be in quite different places in your individual journeys so there is great opportunity for mutual mentoring and learning. Please prepare for your partner meetings by activating your sense of compassion and curiosity.

Learning – quite intentionally – is our focus, through resources (as opposed to “action”) that center the voices of Black people. It is not unusual to find these Black voices lament the lack of interest or commitment among white people to learn the history we were never taught and its lasting impact on every aspect of our society. They want us - white people - “to do the research.” So first and foremost the WLP is about, reading, listening, viewing, and self-reflection.

Black voices are at the heart of this learning. It is impossible to move toward anti-racism without centering and listening to Black voices. The extensive reading list in this packet will give you ample choices of material from some of the leading Black voices of our time. You may discover others resources in the course of your learning that you wish to add to your plan.

Discomfort is a big part of this work which perhaps is why many white people resist it. This is where mutual support and encouragement kicks in to help each of us - at whatever place we are in – to persist in learning and to resist giving up.

Learning – ongoing learning – is essential, but not sufficient. It must be accompanied by **action - informed action**. As our learning deepens our understanding of how systems and personal interactions work to sustain white supremacy, we must set aside our discomfort and interrogate ourselves about our own complicity so our actions are not a perpetuation of that complicity. Good intentions are not enough; good outcomes are the goal.

There are many **actions** white people can take to help; it is important to have done enough research to understand **what kind of action is helpful and what may cause more harm than good**. Anti-racist activist and writer Reni Eddo-Lodge speaks explicitly to this issue.¹

Often white people ask me, very earnestly, what I think they should do to end racism. Anti-racist work – the logistics, the strategy, the organising – needs to be led by the people at the sharp end of injustice. But I also believe that white people who recognize racism have ... a part to play. That part can't be played by wallowing in guilt. White support looks like financial or administrative assistance to the groups doing the vital work. Or intervening when you are needed in bystander situations. Support looks like white advocacy for anti-racist causes in all-white spaces. White people, you need to talk to other white people about race.

Talk to other white people who trust you. Talk to other white people in the areas of your life where you have influence. If you feel burdened by your unearned privilege, try to use it for something and use it where it counts. But don't be anti-racist for the sake of an audience. Being white and anti-racist in your private or professional life, where there's very little praise to be found, is much more difficult, but ultimately more meaningful.

Also

“Black people are not responsible for white supremacy. That is white people’s job. Black people can take care of themselves. White people need to get out of our way; they need to do their own work.”²

1 *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People about Race* Bloomsbury. 2018 p.215

2 A paraphrase of Hawke Newsome, BLM Activist, speaking via Zoom to Black youth in Berkshire County, 2020

Program Outline and Calendar

Timing

The program will run from **October 2022 through May 2023** (last meeting, June 4th).

Learning partners will meet **monthly** starting in October **for at least 1 hour** at a time of their mutual choosing to share/report on individual progress in their plan and insights gained and to encourage each other in deeper reflection.

All participants meet together as a group **three times** by Zoom from 6:00-7:30 PM on a **Sunday afternoon**:

Introductory meeting (**Oct. 16, 2022**);

Check-in (**Jan. 29, 2023**)

Wrap-up (**June 4, 2023**)

Plenary Meetings

Each Plenary meeting is used to share learning and challenges across the entire group. The “breakout room” feature of Zoom will be used – particularly at the first meeting, for partner teams to get acquainted, share their Plans, give each other feedback, and agree on how they will manage their meeting times.

A **Black Mentor** will be present at the end of each plenary meeting for Q & A. This person will be a local Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) professional.

Preparation (before Oct. introductory meeting)

- Please read *So You Want to Talk About Race* by Ijeoma Oluo;
- Subscribe to the [Anti-racism Daily](#) ; it is free (donations welcome); each issue is delivered to your email each morning and covers a specific topic succinctly with links to additional sources.
- Develop a written draft of your personal learning plan to bring to the organizational meeting.

In committing to this program you are joining with other learners. Your sharing in partnership and with the whole is part of the learning experience. Your presence and engagement in all aspects of the program are important for everyone's learning.

Working in Partnership

The focus of this work is on personal learning about how race operates in our society, systemically in all our institutions and in the hearts and minds of each of us.

As you may have already discovered, this is not easy work to do.

As white people we have not had to think about our whiteness; it is easy to see race as something that relates only to other people – those who are not white. As we learn more about what it means to be Black, we come to realize that “white” too is a racial construct with its own meaning; that white supremacist thinking is not just the purview of violent, far-right radicals, but is everywhere, including within us.

It is common to experience denial, resistance, anger, shame, and guilt. It is common to not want to finish difficult texts, to feel overwhelmed by the enormity of this country’s “original sin” and despair at it ever getting any better.

Learning in partnership is to provide **reciprocal mentoring** and a **mutual support system** in working through all these emotions, to keep us from getting stuck, or giving up - to keep us committed to doing the work as so many have been committed for generations before us.

Though you are working on your individual plans, there will be much overlap in what you are learning and feeling. As partners you share your learning and respond to each other with openness, compassion and curiosity. You ask questions of each other to assist each other in “seeing” the way we each have internalized white supremacy; you encourage each other in taking risks to disrupt that way of thinking and behaving.

Consider the following “Touchstones” and “Guiding Questions” as you build your partnership relationship and work to be reciprocal learning mentors.

TOUCHSTONES

Touchstones are an established set of mutually agreed-upon principles that guide how participants will treat, and be with, each other in “deep dialogue” using the Coming to the Table Approach. They aim to address participants’ needs and expectations to feel safe and/or brave enough to speak openly and honestly and help us all make more space for each other. There shouldn’t be too many, nor should they be too rigid, lest they feel like a straitjacket. Touchstones are reminders of standards of behavior. Not hard rules. They are a means to an end, a way toward relationship. If they become an end, they should be revisited. Below are examples that can be used or modified to meet the needs of your group. Developing your own Touchstones is a good way to build group cohesion. The above description is adapted from, and more information about Touchstones can be found in, [The Little Book of Racial Healing](#).

- **Be 100% present with your partner(s).** Set aside the usual distractions of things undone, things to do.
- **Listen deeply.** Listen intently to what is said; listen to the feelings beneath the words. “To ‘listen’ another’s soul into life, into a condition of disclosure and discovery—may be almost the greatest service that any human being ever performs for another” (Douglas Steere).
- **Try it on.** Make an opening for new ideas by trying them on for size. Give yourself the time to get to know them, to consider how they fit you.

- **No fixing.** Each of us is here to discover his or her own truths. We are *not* here to set someone else straight, or to help “right” another’s “wrong”, to “fix” or “correct” what we perceive as broken or incorrect.
- **Identify assumptions; suspend judgments.** Our assumptions, although usually invisible to us, often shape our worldview; our judgments, frequently automatic, can block our growth. By pausing to identify assumptions and suspend judgments, to the degree possible or reasonable, we can listen to the other, and to ourselves, more fully.
- **Share with each other honestly, even when it makes you feel vulnerable.** Help each other to identify blind spots, in order to make space to choose change.
- **Maintain confidentiality.** Create a brave space for courageous sharing by respecting the confidential nature and content of your discussions.

Adapted from ideas, concepts, and practices used in a [Circle of Trust](#) and also from a version initially developed for [Coming to the Table](#) by Ann Holmes Redding, Ph.D. & Pat Russell, Psy. D.

Guiding Questions

The guiding questions are intended to promote self-reflection and personal examination as you consider the material you are studying. Partners may find them useful as queries to each other.

- What surprised you and why?
- Did anything make you uncomfortable, defensive, or angry and why?
- How did what was presented line up or not line up with your own experience / view of the world?
- What did you learn about white-centering? How has it operated in your personal relationships and the opportunities you have had?
- Are you reconsidering any of your assumptions, behaviors or actions? What changes are your thinking about?
- Are you seeing things about yourself and how you lead your life - beliefs and behavior - that you hadn't noticed before?
- What questions are you interested in exploring further?

Learning Plan Template

You may write your learning plan in any format that makes it useful to you. Here are **key elements** to address in it.

1. Where are you in your journey? Why do you want to do this work now? What do you hope to accomplish?

Take some time to reflect on what kind of learning you have done in the recent past. What gaps in your understanding do you feel you have? What really interests you?

Here are some **strategies** for helping you see a range of possibilities.

- Scan the headings in the extensive “Resources for White Learning” included in this packet; they provide a framework for thinking about the many facets of racism and are intentionally arranged as a progression for learning.
- If you are new to this work, consider starting with “The Basics” that come first in the “Resources for White Learning”;
- Review the titles in the “Resources for White Learning”; mark what you have already read/viewed and look for topical gaps in your knowledge.
- If you have already covered the NAACP “gamechanger” topics, pick one or two of interest to investigate in more depth;
- Look over the example plans – real plans from those of us developing this program – to see how some seasoned “travelers” are continuing their journey.

2. Consider how much time you have to commit to this effort on a monthly basis so your choice of focus fits into a plan that allows you to make monthly progress.

3. Provide a rationale for your choice of focus.

This follows from identifying where you are in your journey and where you want to get to.

4. Select specific resources you wish to cover – at least to start.

Use the extensive reading and media lists in the packet. Unless otherwise noted, all the listed sources feature Black voices. One strategy is to start with one book of interest and use it to raise new questions which can lead to other books and media sources.

5. Create a calendar/timeline for yourself that identifies what sources you expect to use for each month, October-May.

NOTE: You are free to revise your plan at any time. There may be opportunity to take in relevant local events – exhibits, plays, music, ... to add to your plan. The point of the plan is to be intentional about what you want to accomplish and to set some benchmarks for yourself that provide structure for your learning and for the partnership.

Resources for White Learning: A Starting Point³

Unless otherwise noted by authored/created by Black persons or other POC

**Deemed especially important by White Learning Circle members*

The Basics

History - Books

All that She Carried: the Journey of Ashley's Sack, a Family Keepsake by Tiya Miles

**Caste: the Origins of Our Discontents* by Isabel Wilkerson

The Color of Compromise: the Truth about the American Church's Complicity in Racism by Jemar Tisby

Four Hundred Souls: A Community History of African America, 1619-2019 edited by Ibram X Kendi and Keisha N. Blain

**Stamped from the Beginning: the Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* by Ibram X. Kendi

They Were Her Property: White Women as Slave Owners in the American South by Stephanie E. Jones-Rogers

**The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* by Isabel Wilkerson

Important works by other than Black authors

The Half has Never been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism by Edward Baptist

History - Media

[*The 1619 Project](#)

[The Origin of Race in the USA](#) from a PBS Series

[The Myth of Race Debunked in 3 min.](#)

[Race and Racist Institutions – from Stonybrook University](#)

The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross author/host Henry Louis Gates, PBS documentary – widely available in libraries

[Elizabeth Freeman: From Slavery to Freedom](#) OLLI talk by Dr. Frances Jones-Sneed

Being Black - Books

**Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates

Black is the Body by Emily Bernard

Eloquent Rage: a Black Feminist Discovers her Superpower by Brittney Cooper

Fear of Black Consciousness by Lewis R. Gordon

**Heavy* by Kiese Laymon

How to be Less Stupid about Race by Chrystal Fleming

Hunger by Roxanne Gay

I'm Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness by Austin Channing Brown

Men We Reaped by Jesmyn Ward

No Ashes in the Fire by Darnell Moore

One Drop: Shifting the Lens on Race by Yaba Blay

South to America: A Journey Below the Mason-Dixon Line to Understand the Soul of a Nation by Imani Perry

Thick by Tressie McMillan Cottom

When They Call You a Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Memoir by patrice khan-cullors and asha bandele

The Yellow House by Sarah M. Broom

³ This by no means an exhaustive list. Most of the book titles were published between 2010 and 2021. There are many important older ones and new titles, online and media sources created by Black and other POC coming out all the time.

Being Black – Media

[Who Is Black In America \(CNN Documentary\)](#)

[Race Matters: America in Crisis PBS NewsHour Special](#)

Whiteness - Books

Blind Spot: Hidden Biases of Good People by Mahzarin Banaji and Anthony Greenwald

History of White People by Nell Irvin Painter

Mediocre: the Dangerous Legacy of White Male America by Ijeoma Oluo

**White Rage: the Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide* by Carol Anderson

Important works by other than Black authors

Dying of Whiteness: How the Politics of Racial Resentment is Killing America's Heartland by Jonathan M. Metz

Nice Racism: How Progressive White People Perpetuate Racial Harm by Robin DiAngelo

No More Heroes: Grassroots Challenges to the Savior Mentality by Jordan Flaherty

Waking Up White by Debby Irving

**White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism* by Robin DiAngelo

White Tears, Brown Scars: How White Feminism Betrays Women of Color by Ruby Hamad

Whiteness - Media

*[Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack](#) Peggy McIntosh, feminist, activist

[Robin DiAngelo and the Problem With Anti-racist Self-Help: What two new books reveal about the white progressive pursuit of racial virtue](#) By Danzy Senna

[White People: I Don't Want You To Understand Me Better, I Want You To Understand Yourself](#) by Ijeoma Oluo

[The White Man's Guilt - Ebony article by James Baldwin](#)

[The March of the Karens](#) by Lagaya Mishan in NYT Magazine

[The White Savior Industrial Complex](#) by Teju Cole (Atlantic Magazine)

White Supremacy - Books

**Backlash: What Happens when We Talk Honestly About Racism in America* by George Yancey

Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World and Become a Good Ancestor by Layla Saad and Robin DiAngelo

Racecraft: the Soul of Inequality in American Life by Karen E. Fields and Barbara J. Fields

The Origin of Others by Toni Morrison

Important works by other than Black authors

American Swastika: Inside the White Power Movements Hidden Spaces of Hate 2nd ed. By Pete Simi and Robert Futrell

Everything You Love will Burn: Inside the Rebirth of White Nationalism in America by Vegas Tenold

The False Cause: Fraud, Fabrication and White Supremacy in Confederate Memory by Adam Domb

When Hate Groups March Down Mainstreet: Engaging a Community Response by Deborah Levina and Marc Brenman

White Supremacy – Media

Important sources created by other than Black persons

[White Supremacy Culture](#) Tema Okun's contribution to "our shared anti-racist racial justice commitment"

Anti-Racism - Books

Against Civility: the Hidden Racism in Our Obsession with Civility by Alex Zamalin

Anti-Racism: an introduction by Alex Zamalin

**How to be an Anti-Racist* by Ibram X. Kendi
Letters to My White Friends by Das-Devlin Ross
Racing to Justice: Transforming Our Conceptions of Self and Other to Build an Inclusive Society by John A. Powell
Tears We Cannot Stop by Michael Eric Dyson
What White People Can Do Next: From Allyship to Coalition by Emma Dabiri

Important works by other than Black authors

America's Original Sin: Racism, White Privilege and the Bridge to a New America by Jim Wallis
Dispatches From the Race War by Tim Wise
How I Shed My Skin: Unlearning the Racist Lessons of a Southern Childhood by Jim Grimsley

Anti-racism – Media

[African American Policy Forum](#)

[Color of Change](#)

[The difference between being "not racist" and antiracist by Ibram X. Kendi](#) TED talk

[Ezra Klein Interviews Ibram X Kendi](#) Transcript from the *New York Times*

[Guide to Allyship](#) by [amélie lamont](#)

[A People-powered Movement to end Harassment](#) ihollaback

NAACP “Gamechangers” Issues

Criminal Justice - Books

Chokehold: Policing Black Men by Paul Butler

The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime and the Making of Modern Urban America by Khalil Gibran Muhammad

**Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption* by Bryan Stevenson

Just Pursuit: A Black Prosecutor's Fight for Fairness by Laura Coates

Locking Up Our Own: Crime and Punishment in Black America by James Forman

**The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander

The Rage of Innocence: How America Criminalizes Black Youth by Kristin Henning

They Can't Kill Us All: Ferguson, Baltimore and a New Era in America's Racial Justice Movement by Wesley Lowery

Important works by other than Black authors

American Prison: A Reporter's Undercover Journey into the Business of Punishment by Shane Bauer

**Until We Reckon: Violence, Mass Incarceration and a Road to Repair* by Danielle Sered

Criminal Justice – Media

[The Black Family in the Age of Mass Incarceration](#) by Ta-Nehisi Coates

[Slaves of the State](#) 13th Amendment, mass incarceration and the prison industrial complex

[Educating4Democracy](#) blog

[What prosecutors and incarcerated people can learn from each other by Jarrell Daniels](#) TED talk

[Othering and Belonging Institute](#)

Economic Justice - Books

**The Color of Money: Black Banks and the Racial Wealth Gap* by Mehrsa Baradaran

**Decolonizing Wealth: Indigenous Wisdom to Heal Divides and Restore Balance* by Edgar Villanueva

The Divide: American Injustice in the Age of the Wealth Gap by Matt Taibbi

Knocking the Hustle: Against the Neoliberal Turn in Black Politics by Lester K. Spence

**The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together* by Heather McGhee

Economic Justice – Media

[Racism has a cost for everyone by Heather C. McGhee](#) TED talk
[Racial Justice also means Economic Justice](#) excerpt The Laura Flanders Show
[Othering and Belonging Institute](#)

Education - Books

Blackballed: the Black & White Politics of Race on America's Campuses by Lawrence Ross
Courageous Conversations: Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools by Glenn E. Singleton
For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood by Christopher Emdin
The Price of Nice: How Good Intentions Maintain Educational Inequity edited by Agelina E. Castagno
The Skin We Speak: thoughts on Language and Culture in the Classroom by Lisa Delpit
Street Data: A Next Generation Model for Equity, Pedagogy, and School Transformation by Shane Safir and Jamila Dugan
Unconscious Bias in the Schools: A Developmental Approach to Exploring Race and Racism by Tracey A. Benson and Sarah E. Fiarman
We Want to do More than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom by Bettina Love
**Why are all the Black Kids Sitting in the Cafeteria: and Other Conversations About Race* by Beverly Daniel Tatum

Important works by other than Black authors

Schooltalk: Rethinking What We Say About—and to—Students Every Day by Mica Pollock

Education – Media

[Teaching for Black Lives](#) Conversation with the editors (Dyan Watson, Jesse Hagopian, Wayne Au) of the book *Teaching for Black Lives*

[Pushout: the Criminalization of Black Girls in School](#) Documentary based on the book *Push-out: The Criminalization of Black Girls in School* by Monique W. Morris. Streaming on Kanopy; available for cardholders at Berkshire Athenaeum and other local libraries.

[Hechinger Report: Covering Innovation & Inequality in Education](#)

Environmental Justice - Books

Black Faces, White Spaces: Re-imagining the Relationship of African Americans to the Great Outdoors by Carolyn Finney

**The Color of Food* by Natasha Bowens

**Farming While Black* by Leah Penniman

A Terrible Thing to Waste: Environmental Racism and Its Assault on the American Mind by Harriet A. Washington

Toxic Communities: Environmental Racism, Industrial Pollution, and Residential Mobility by Dorceta Taylor

Important work by other than Black author

Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants by Robin Wall Kimmerer

What the Eyes Don't See: a Story of Crisis, Resistance and Hope in an American City by Mona Hanna-Attisha

Environmental Justice – Media

[David Lammy: Climate justice can't happen without racial justice](#) TED talk

[Majora Carter: Greening the ghetto](#) TED talk

[Climate Justice Alliance](#)

[Sunrise Movement](#)

[Othering and Belonging Institute](#)

Housing - Books

**White Space, Black Hood: Opportunity Hoarding and Segregation in the Age of Inequality* by Sheryll Cashin
Race for Profit: How Banks and the Real Estate Industry Undermined Black Homeownership by Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor

Important works by other than Black authors

**The Color of Law: a Forgotten History of how our Government Segregated America* by Richard Rothstein

**Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City* by Matthew Desmond

How to Kill a City: Gentrification, Inequality and the Fight for the Neighborhood by P.E. Moskowitz

Race and Place: How Urban Geography Shapes the Journey to Reconciliation by David P. Leong

Segregation by Design: Local Politics and Inequality in American Cities by Jessica Trounstein

Housing – Media

[Shelterforce: the Original Voice of Community Development](#)

[What if gentrification was about healing communities instead of displacing them? By Liz Ogbu](#) TED talk

[Mass Fair Housing](#)

[Dudley Neighbors Community Land Trust](#)

[Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies](#)

[Citizen's Housing and Planning Association](#)

[Othering and Belonging Institute](#)

Health - Books

Black Fatigue: How Racism Erodes the Mind, body, and Spirit by Mary-Frances Winters

**Black Man in a White Coat* by Damon Tweedy

Just Medicine: a Cure for Racial Inequality in American Health Care by Dayna Bowen Matthew

8Medical Apartheid by Harriet Washington

**My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies* by Resmaa Menakem

Unapologetic Guide to Black Mental Health by Rheeda Walker

Important works by other than Black authors

The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot

Health – Media

[Why your doctor should care about social justice by Mary Bassett](#) TED talk

[How racism makes us sick by David R. Williams](#) TED talk

[The Use of Race in Medicine and Implications for Health Equity](#) session 1 UCSF School of Medicine

[Othering and Belonging Institute](#)

Reparations – Books

**From Here to Equality* by William Darity and Kirsten Mullen

Long Overdue: the Politics of Racial Reparations by Charles P. Henry

Reparations – Media

[The Case for Reparations](#) by Ta-Nehisi Coates in *The Atlantic*

[Why We Need Reparations for Black Americans](#) by Rashawn Ray and Andre M. Perry

Voting Rights - Books

**One Person, No Vote* by Carol Anderson

Say It Louder by Tiffany Cross

Uncounted: the Crisis of Voter Suppression in American by Gilda Daniels

The Voting Rights War: the NAACP and the On-going Struggle for Justice by Gloria J. Browne-

Marshall

Important works by other than Black authors

On Account of Race: the Supreme Court, White Supremacy and the Ravaging of African American Voting Rights by Lawrence Goldstone

Voting Rights – Media

[Making the Constitution Safe for Democracy](#) African American Policy Forum

[Voting Rights Roundup](#) Brennan Center for Justice

All In: the Fight for Democracy with Stacey Abrams – documentary on Amazon Prime

[Whose Vote Counts?](#) Frontline

Other Approaches

Offered to suggest different windows into the Black experience with a small sampling of authors and titles.

Biography

Black Radical: the Life and Times of William Monroe Trotter by Kerri K. Greenidge

Black Revolutionary: William Patterson & the Globalization of the African American Freedom Struggle by Gerald Horne

The Dead are Rising: the Life of Malcolm X by Les Payne

Dean Dixon: Negro at Home, Maestro Abroad by Rufus Jones, Jr.

Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision by Barbara Ransby

Looking for Lorraine: The Radiant and Radical Life of Lorraine Hansberry by Imani Perry

Until I Am Free: Fannie Lou Hamer's Enduring Message to America by Keisha N. Blain

W.E.B. DuBois by David Levering Lewis

Feminism and Black Women

Black Feminism Reimagined: After Intersectionality by Jennifer C. Nash

Dear Ijeawele, or a Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Sister Citizen: Shame Stereotypes and Black Women in America by Melissa V. Harris-Perry

Sister Outsider by Audre Lorde

White Tears, Brown Scars: How White Feminism Betrays Women of Color by Ruby Hamad

Why I'm No Longer Talking with White People About Race by Reni Eddo-Lodge ch. 5

Culture _ Books

Black Joy by Tracey Michael Lewis-Giggets

Joy Unspeakable by Barbara Holmes

Traveling While Black: Essays Inspired by a Life on the Move by Nanjala Nyabola

Culture – Media

[Black Joy](#): A Conversation with Tracey Lewis-Giggets hosted by NPR's Michelle Martin and sponsored by the African American Museum of History and Culture

Through the Lens of Literature

Begin Again: James Baldwin's America and Its Urgent Lessons for Our Own by Eddie S. Glaude Jr.

Read Until You Understand: the Profound Wisdom of Black Life and Literature by Farah Jasmine Griffin

Food - Books

The Cooking Gene: A Journey Through AfroAmerican Culinary History in the Old South by Michael Twitty

High on the Hog: A Culinary Journey from Africa to America by Jessica B. Harris

Food – Media

Afroculinaria Michael Twitty's Blog

High on the Hog: How African American Cuisine Transformed America Netflix Documentary

How to Talk About Race

The Conversation: How Seeking and Speaking the Truth about Racism can Radically Transform Individuals and Organizations by Robert Livingston

Courageous Conversations: Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools by Glenn E. Singleton

The Arts

Poetry and the Arts: A Sampler - Books

African-American Poetry: 250 Years of Struggle & Song edited by Kevin Young

Young, Gifted and Black: A New Generation of Artists – The Lumpkin-Boccuzzi Family Collection of Contemporary Art

A Little Devil in America: In Praise of Black Performance by Hanif Abdurraqib

Poetry and Arts Sampler - Media

[A storyteller with a paintbrush](#)

[Nina Simone in Ten Songs](#)

[Kehinde Wiley on painting Barack Obama](#)

[Amanda Gorman recites "The Hill We Climb"](#)

[ARD: Support Black Poetry](#)

[August Wilson, The Ground on Which I Stand](#)

Quincy: A Life Beyond Measure documentary about Quincy Jones; Netflix

Classic Black Authors and Works – a starting point

Autobiography of Malcolm X

The Fire Next Time by James Baldwin and other Baldwin works

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings by Maya Angelou and other Angelou works

The Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass - An American Slave

The Souls of Black Folk by W.E.B. DuBois and other DuBois works

Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston

Works by Angela Davis

Works by Audre Lorde

Plays of August Wilson

Works by Henry Louis Gates Jr.

Works by Toni Morrison

Works by bell hooks

Works by Cornell West

Acclaimed Contemporary Black Novelists – a small sample

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Octavia Butler

Yaa Gyasi

Honoree Fanonne Jeffers

Imbolo Mbue

Tara Stringfellow

Brit Bennett

Danielle Evans

Nathan Harris

Robert Jones, Jr.

Terry MacMillan

Colson Whitehead

Lizzie Damilola Blackburn

Bernadette Evaristo

Marlon James

Asha Lemmie

James McBride

Jacqueline Woodson

Acclaimed Contemporary Black Poets – a small sample

Jericho Brown

Amanda Gordon

Tracy K. Smith

Donte Collins

Claudine Rankine

Danez Smith

Ross Gay

Nicole Sealey

Feature film and series

Most streaming services now offer a lot of Black created content in both series and feature length film formats. e.g. Netflix titles

- *Dear White Person*
- *She's Gotta Have It*, (Spike Lee's remake into a series of his earlier film by the same title)
- *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* an award winning film starring Viola Davis, among others

Tik Tok Creators:

@white_woman_whisperer

@isetheadvocate

@zai_rambles

@royalstar7.0

White Learning Partners Plan LCB

To continue learning about the Black experience through Black literature and Black voices with a local Berkshire component where possible.

To do some extensive reading and reflecting on the Black experience in America through Black literature.

Two years of White Learning Circle has been fabulous and informative but I am kind of burnt out and downtrodden by all the history and data I have ingested. I need a more balanced look that includes the art and artistry and joy of Black writers and artists as opposed to the mostly sad and depressing history and treatment that people of color have had to overcome in “our land of the free” the last 400 years.

I hope by this to become an even better ally, by not only being informed and being able to articulate and speak to race issues, but also to constantly point out the amazing things Black artists have given America, and to constantly try to counteract systemic racism and white supremacy.

8 Sessions

1. Open with background readings and how they will shape my questions and approach in my readings.
2. Ta-Nahesi Coates: easing into fiction but with a real current racial awareness
3. James McBride
4. Colson Whitehead
5. Zora Neale Hurston
6. James Weldon Johnson
7. W.E.B. DuBois'
8. Close – did I meet my goals? Why or Why not? How? Did it create new goals for me?

PERSONAL READING LIST

Black Joy by Tracey Michae'l lewis-giggetts

So You Want To Talk About Race by Ijeoma Oluo & *The Conversation* by Robert Livingston

Joy Unspeakable by Barbara Holmes

Forged In The Fiery Furnace by Diana Hayes

The 1619 Project by Nikole Hannah-Jones

African American Heritage In The Upper Housatonic Valley (Frances Jones-Sneed, Bernard Drew)

African American Historic Burial Grounds And Gravesites Of New England by Glenn Knoblock

3 Older and 3 More Current writers

WEB DuBois

=====

The Souls Of Black Folk

John Brown

Reconstruction

Prayers For Dark People

The Gift Of Black Folk

The Talented Tenth

Writings

Data Portraits

Ta-Nahesi Coates

=====

Between The World And Me
The Beautiful Struggle
The Water Dancer
Black Panther (and movie 2018)
Captain America (and movies)
"The Case For Reparations" (magazine article)

Zora Neale Hurston

=====

You Don't Know Us Negroes
Their Eyes Were Watching God (and 2005 film)
Dust Tracks On A Road
The Complete Stories
Seraph On The Summer
Every Tongue Got To Confess
Tell My Horse
Moses, Man Of The Mountain
Mules And Men
Jonah's Gourd Vine
Mule Bone

James Mcbride

=====

The Good Lord Bird (and series Hulu)
Deacon King Kong
Miracle At St Anna (movie 2008 amazon)
The Color Of Water

Colson Whitehead

=====

Underground Railroad (and series amazon)
The Nickel Boys
Harlem Shuffle
Zone One
John Henry Days
The Intuitionist

James Weldon Johnson

=====

The Creation
The Books Of American Negro Spirituals
Along This Way
The Autobiography Of An Ex Colored Man
Poems, Essays, Editorials
Black Legacy Project Berkshire, Lift Every Voice & Sing, Music In Common, Fall 21-Fall22
(Rufus Jones, Blp, Owns Weldon's Cabin)

White Learning Partner Plan

JRT

Where I am

When I joined the NAACP and got involved in the work of the Berkshire Branch I thought I knew quite a bit about race in the United States. But in a short time after listening to others – and hearing from multiple sources “You have to do the research” - I realized I was pretty ignorant. When COVID shut the world down, I began “the research” in a somewhat haphazard, but persistent way. I found it hard going and wished I had someone to share it with. A variety of circumstances led me to think of creating a White Learning Circle for the Branch membership; once the leadership accepted my proposal and I actually had to do something, I began to think much more systematically in the context of the Branch strategic plan. What emerged was the syllabus for the first White Learning Circle.

I now have participated in two White Learning Circles – and have covered a lot of material and learned a lot. I also do get that there is a lifetime (what is left for me) of learning to go.

As someone who is excessively adverse to conflict, the big gap for me at this point is being comfortable talking with other white people about race – especially those who are “color blind” - and also feeling competent to challenge white supremacist thinking or behavior when I encounter it.

What I Plan to Do

1. **Study** 3 books – all ones I have read through, but need to spend more time with to integrate into my thinking so the ideas become useful:
 - *How to Have Difficult Conversations* by Bruce Patton, Douglas Stone, Sheila Heen
 - *Courageous Conversations* by Glenn Singleton
 - *The Conversation* by Robert Livingston
2. Read the work of Saidiya Hartman who has developed her own method of reconstructing the history of Black people for whom evidence that meets the standards set by – mostly white - historians does not exist; also read Claudine Rankine's *Don't Let Me Be Lonely, Citizen, and Just Us*.
3. Use a more systematic approach for identifying new publications about race and white supremacy that may be useful for White Learning. e.g. regularly checking reviewing sources and websites. What I have been doing is too occasional and haphazard.
4. Continue using my “down” time to explore Black created, directed and acted films, series, etc. as I have found it quite effective for helping me visualize/normalize a Black presence in my mostly white spaces.

Calendar

1. Cover half of a “conversation” book each month.
2. Alternate between Hartman and Rankine – one book each month.
3. First month, search for best sources and develop strategy; then carry out strategy.
4. Ongoing.

White Learning Plan

JIS

Where I am?

I begun to see the world in truth the day I turned 18

A true but dramatic way to say that in my senior year of highschool the racialized society we lived in came into my view. I took a dual enrollment class with Dr. Christopher Himes and Gwedolyn VanSant called schools in society (or something similar) and it began the opening of my eyes to the colorblindness that I had grown up within. A year later, I started at MCLA and worked towards both my education and sociology degree. During those four years my anti-racist learning only grew and was greatly affected by another class called Race Relations taught by Dr. Ingrid Castro. I graduated MCLA in 2020 with my Sociology degree and began working for a North Adams non-profit. In my 2 years at this non-profit, during the COVID-19 Pandemic, I was able to create the Inclusive Internship Preparation Program which gave increased access to college students from disadvantaged groups to the Berkshire Workforce.

I joined the WLC in 2021 in hopes to find more likeminded people in our area who may be doing the same work as me professionally, but what I found was many people just starting their personal journeys with antiracism and a few continuing on their lifelong journey with it. The Circle created a space for me to have intergenerational conversations about race with people older than myself and to see how the way they were raised influenced their perspectives. The readings also opened my eyes to whiteness as its own racial category and gave me endless amounts of historical facts and data. This seemed overwhelming at times but overall the learning confirmed to me that this issue is and always will be larger than me, but that does not mean I shouldn't try to help it, it just means I cannot do it alone.

In recent news, Roe v. Wade was overturned in the United States. I may live in Massachusetts, which is a 'protected' state, but this news creates a sense of devastation in me. I feel an overwhelming grief amongst our underprivileged residents in the country, and as one of those people I am grieving too.

What do I plan to do?

1. *Black Feminism: Reimagined Intersectionality* will be the focus and leading genre of my learning over the next couple of months. I plan to read a variety of books both non-fiction and fiction by women of color. Some examples include: *Mediocre: The Dangerous Legacy of White Male America* and *So You Want to Talk about Race* both by Ijeoma Oluo, *The Warmth of Other Suns* by Isabel Wilkerson, *The Price of Nice: How Good Intentions Maintain Educational Inequity*, *Black Feminism Reimagined After Intersectionality* and *Birthing Black Mothers* by Jennifer Nash, *Beloved* by Toni Morrison, *Care Free Black Girls: A Celebration of Black Women in Popular Culture* by Zeba Blay, *In Every Mirror She's Black* by Lolá Ákínmádé Åkerström, *Stop Telling Women to Smile* by Tatyana Fazlalizadeh and many more. The titles listed above are mostly titles I already have on my to be read bookshelf but also include a few new ones on my wish list. The other reason that this is not my exhaustive list is that I want the ability to let my questions and intuition lead this learning. If a certain author, topic or question catches my focus I want the flexibility to follow it. Lastly as part of this commitment I plan to seek out more women of color creators in the media I consume for pleasure including music, art, movies, shows, and tik-tok.

2. Community Building

The other half of my plan is to build up the community around me and make myself more accessible within it. This is the action part of my plan and it will come with many parts over the next couple of months. The following are just a few ways I see myself acting on community building: continuing membership of the NAACP, involvement in the White Learning Planning Committee, involvement in the Berkshire Pride Committee, attending and supporting local events with topics surrounding inequality and race-based matters, pushing more media/creating more outreach about food accessibility in North Adams,

informed voting and having honest conversations with the people close to me about race and their white privilege.

Calendar

To Start

1. *Mediocre: The Dangerous Legacy of White Male America* and *So You Want to Talk about Race* both by Ijeoma Oluo
2. *Black Feminism Reimagined After Intersectionality* by Jennifer Nash
3. *In Every Mirror She's Black* by Lolá Ákínmádé Åkerström
4. Review Readings, Notes and Actions : Choose a topic to follow or read from the variety below

Topical (in order: Education, Pop Culture, Sexual Harrasment, Reproductive Rights)

5. *The Price of Nice: How Good Intentions Maintain Educational Inequity*
6. *Care Free Black Girls: A Celebration of Black Women in Popular Culture* by Zeba Blay
7. *Stop Telling Women to Smile* by Tatyana Fazlalizadeh
8. *Birthing Black Mothers* by Jennifer Nash

To End - Review Learnings, Reading, Notes and Actions. Access the next steps in the journey based on life in 8 months time.

White Learning Partners Plan LKM

Understanding the Black experience in America through the eyes, thought, and heart of Black Artists

Purpose:

- To continue learning about the Black Experience through Black Exhibition and Performance Art, incorporating Black voices with a local/Berkshire component where possible.
- To explore through experience and reading of selected significant works and in the process reflect on the Black Experience in America through these works that Black Artists have given the world.

Two years of participating in the White Learning Circle has been a topic-rich overview that has provided a foundation for me and a desire for diving in deeper in order to better understand the Black experience in America. While participating in a previous White Learning Circle is not a prerequisite, some previous readings and experiences that have raised personal awareness of racism and its systemic supports would be helpful. Openness to deep learning is essential to this exploration. Through selected performance and presentation art, I will explore 1) my own response to their works, and how I have changed over time, 2) What Black artists say about their work, and 3) The differences between their stated intent and my perceptions. I want to learn how to better articulate and speak to Race issues, and also to consistently and ongoingly point out the wonderful contributions Black artists have made to America.

Through this endeavor I intend to not only increase my own awareness of my own thinking and actions but also to be more consistent in noticing racial offences and micro-aggressions, and in Intervening appropriately to do my part helping to dismantle systematic Racism and White Supremacy.

Plan of Action:

This targeted exploration and learning will consist of 8 segments, starting the week of October 16, 2022 with a group Zoom meeting and concluding the end of May, 2023. The format for the WLP is individual, self-paced study with monthly partners conversations of at least 30 minutes duration, via Zoom, phone, or in-person, plus whatever email observations and learnings people want to share with their partners. We will also meet 3 times with the entire White Learning Partners group over the duration of program: October, January, and May/June.

EXPLORING THE VOICE OF BLACK ARTISTS.

For each segment:

- Read/watch the selected works
- Write your initial thoughts and impressions - what did you feel, think, want to do, etc.
- Follow your curiosity and intuition to reread/rewatch, to find more about the artist and what that artist said about works of art or art in general, or what has been written about the artist.
- Write about how to your secondary explorations fit, or not, with what your initial perceptions were? What questions do you have now? What will you do next?
- Share some of your writings with your partner(s)

Reading + Watching List:

1. Background/context video and article

1.a. Why theater is essential to democracy. Oskar Eustis.

https://www.ted.com/talks/oskar_eustis_why_theater_is_essential_to_democracy

1.b. You think your pain and your heartbreak are unprecedented... James Baldwin. Life

Magazine, May 24, 1963. [https://books.google.de/books?](https://books.google.de/books?id=mEkEAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA81&hl=de&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=2#v=onepage&q&f=false)

[id=mEkEAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA81&hl=de&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=2#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.de/books?id=mEkEAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA81&hl=de&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=2#v=onepage&q&f=false)

"You think your pain and your heartbreak are unprecedented in the history of the world, but

then you read. It was books that taught me that the things that tormented me most were the very things that connected me with all the people who were alive, who had ever been alive."

2. Until. Nick Cave. <https://massmoca.org/event/nick-cave-until/> Walk through with the artist. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GrOnXvNH_UQ
3. Walk With Me. Pops Petersen. <https://www.pospeterson.com/> REINVENTING Rockwell. Wall mural, Center St., Pittsfield, MA.
4. *Dance*
 4. a. As The Wind Blows. Amy Hall Garner, Hubbard Street Chicago. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=niVrolsohys>
 4. b. Evidence. Ronald K. Brown, Choreographer. <https://vimeo.com/446513405> Post show interview: <https://vimeo.com/152462734>
5. IMPRINTED, Illustrating Race. Robyn Phillips Pendleton, Curator. Norman Rockwell Museum. <https://www.nrm.org/2022/04/imprinted-illustrating-race/> Including Berkshire community interviews.
6. The Niceties. Eleanor Burgess. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zei1NzPcNTQ> Read online for free. <https://www.scribd.com/document/481092152/The-Niceties-PDF>
7. Fences. August Wilson. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PoRmIJ7eFMk> Read online for free: <https://archive.org/details/fencesaugustwilson>
8. Deep Water. Alexandra Foradas, Curator, and Manolis Sueuga, Williams College Art History Graduate Program Curatorial Fellow. <https://massmoca.org/event/deep-water/>