

**Invitation
to white members
NAACP Berkshire County Branch
to join a
White Learning Circle**

“Racism is not the shark in the water, racism is the water”

The most important step white people can take on the journey to live as an anti-racist is to become well versed in the history of racism – its origins and its consequences. NAACP Berkshire County is organizing a *White Learning Circle* to facilitate and support this learning for white members.

Keep reading, if you are interested in:

broadening your understanding of the perspectives, experience, and history of Black and other marginalized people in the United States;
understanding the systems that operate at all levels of our society as oppressive forces;
exploring your own unconscious biases;
considering both the role of white people generally and your own personal role in combating white supremacy.

We are forming a learning circle of at least 5 and no more than 12 people to study through reading and discussion and to support each other in finding our way to combat white supremacy.

The group will begin in October 2020 and meet bi-weekly for 90 minutes, through May 2021- 16 sessions in all. We would like 100% attendance at every session.

Members are expected to spend significant time between meetings reading background material (1 poem, 1 book, daily newsletter) and preparing for participation in each meeting.

Meeting time: Sunday 3:00-4:30 PM
Location: Zoom – at least until January 2021

Expectations for members

- Prioritize the work in your daily life
- Attend every meeting
- Prepare for every meeting
- Participate by active listening and honest, constructive speaking
- Share leadership/ facilitation

You can find detailed information about the learning circle in the syllabus and reading list on the next pages (also available on the Branch website under *Resources > White Learning Circle*)

After reviewing this material, if you wish to make a commitment to participate in the learning circle, please send an email to:

naacpberkshirecounty@gmail.com
SUBJECT: WLC

If commitments exceed the number of spaces, we will fill the spaces in order received.

**NAACP Berkshire County Branch
White Learning Circle
Syllabus**

Required texts

The Vintage Book of African American Poetry – each member needs to purchase their own copy
(est. \$17 new; used copies readily available for less)

Anti-Racist Daily <https://www.antiracismdaily.com/> -
(each member needs to subscribe; it is free; donations welcome)

Each meeting will have the same general format:

Open with the reading of a poem
Discuss one issue of the previous week's *Anti-Racist Daily*
Reality check with a Black Mentor
Discussion of current topic

Black mentors

The circle is composed of white members only:

- so members do not refrain from honest speaking for fear of “exposing themselves”
- so white members do not look to a Black person to raise the difficult issues and to make white members feel good;

In order to keep the Black experience framed in our discussion, a Black mentor will attend the beginning of most meetings to help with questions and issues that arose from the previous discussion. Most Black mentors will be from the Branch leadership.

Subject matter

- Early sessions will address origins and history of racism, the Black experience and being white;
- Then there will be 7 sessions (one each) for 7 of our “gamechangers”;
- Over the long holiday (Dec.-Jan.) break, the reading will be a classic work;
- Final sessions will be on white supremacy, and anti-racism.

Everyone will read one book from the Resources list for each topic – something you have not read before. If you expect to rely on the library for your books, please plan ahead, so you are able to read the book BEFORE the discussion. Many books have multiple copies available through the CWMARS library network, so you can acquire a copy by placing a hold if your local library does not have it available on the shelf.

Discussion will focus on what we each have learned about racism, and how we are integrating that learning into our own sense of self.

Calendar

- Oct. 4** **Introduction**
Poem
Overview of plan
Personal introductions
Ground rules
Syllabus – discussion and modifications, poem assignments, discussion facilitators
The week from *The Anti-Racism Daily*
- Oct. 18** **History**
Poem
The week from *The Anti-Racism Daily*
Discussion
- Nov. 1** **Being Black**
Poem
Reality check History:
The week from *The Anti-Racism Daily*
Discussion
- Nov. 15** **Being White**
Poem
Reality Check: Being Black
The week from *The Anti-Racism Daily*
Discussion
- Nov. 29** **Criminal Justice**
Poem
The week from *The Anti-Racism Daily*
Discussion
- Dec. 13** **Education**
Poem
Reality check: Criminal Justice
The week from *The Anti-Racism Daily*
Discussion
- Jan. 10** **Classic Works**
Poem
Reality check: Education
The week from *The Anti-Racism Daily*
Discussion
- Jan. 24** **Environmental Justice**
Poem
The week from *The Anti-Racism Daily*
Discussion

- Feb. 7** **Housing**
Poem
Reality check: Environmental Justice
The week from *The Anti-Racism Daily*
Discussion -
- Feb. 21** **Health**
Poem
Reality check: Housing
The week from *The Anti-Racism Daily*
Discussion -
- Mar. 7** **Voting Rights**
Poem
Reality check: Health
The week from *The Anti-Racism Daily*
Discussion
- Mar. 21** **Economic Justice**
Poem
Reality check: Voting rights
The week from *The Anti-Racism Daily*
Discussion
- April 4** **White Supremacy**
Poem
Reality check: Economic Justice
The week from *The Anti-Racism Daily*
Discussion
- April 18** **Anti-Racism**
Poem
The week from *The Anti-Racism Daily*
Discussion
- May 2** **Where should we go from here?**
Poem
Reality check: Anti-Racism
The week from *The Anti-Racism Daily*
Discussion
- May 16** **White Learning Circle – Evaluation**
Poem
The week from *The Anti-Racism Daily*
Discussion

Reading List

Always in Progress

Poems

Select from *The Vintage Book of African American Poetry* – published in 2000, it includes poets born from 1720s to 1960s with a substantive introduction.

History

The Warmth of Other Suns by Irene Wilkerson

Looking for Lorraine by Imani Perry

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

Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America by Ira Berlin

Out of the House of Bondage by Thaviola Glymph

A Nation Under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration by Steven Hahn

Black Reconstruction by W.E.B. DuBois

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

Being Black

Heavy by Kiese Laymon

No Ashes in the Fire by Darnell Moore

Thick by Tressie McMillan Cottom

How to be Less Stupid about Race by Chrystal Fleming

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

Hunger by Roxanne Gay

The Yellow House by Sarah M. Broom

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

Black is the Body by Emily Bernard

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

Being white

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

White Fragility by Robin DiAngelo

Waking Up White by Debby Irving

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

History of White People by Nell Irvin Painter

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

Criminal Justice

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

The New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander

They Can't Kill Us All: The Story of the Struggle for Black Lives by Wesley Lowery

Policing Black Bodies: How Black Lives are Surveilled and How to Work for Change by Angela Hattery

Chokehold: Policing Black Men by Paul Butler

Policing the Black Man: Arrest, Prosecution and Imprisonment Essays by Angela Davis and others

Criminal Justice (cont.)

I Can't Breathe: A Killing on Bay Street by Matt Taibbi

Beneath a Ruthless Sun: A Story of Violence, Race, and Justice Lost and Found by Gilbert King

Education

Unconscious Bias in the Schools: A Developmental Approach to Exploring Race and Racism by Tracey A. Benson and Sarah E. Fiarman

Why are all the Black Kids Sitting in the Cafeteria: and Other Conversations About Race by Beverly Daniel Tatum

Everyday Anti-racism: Getting Real about Race in Schools ed. By Mica Pollock

Push-out: The Criminalization of Black Girls in School by Monique W. Morris

We Want to do More than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom by Bettina Love

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

Classic Works

The Souls of Black Folk by W.E.B. DuBois

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass - An American Slave by Frederick Douglass

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

Toni Morrison novels

The Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison

Work by Henry Louis Gates Jr.

Work by Cornell West

Environmental Justice

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

Clean and White: A History of Environmental Racism in the United States by Carl Zimring

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

Farming While Black by Leah Penniman

The Color of Food by Natasha Bowens

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

Housing

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

There Goes the 'Hood: Views of Gentrification from the Ground Up by Lance Freeman

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

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

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

Health

Unapologetic Guide to Black Mental Health by Rheedea Walker
Medical Apartheid by Harriet Washington
Killing the Black Body by Dorothy Roberts
Black Man in a White Coat by Damon Tweedy
Unmasking Racism in Healthcare by Marie Edwige Seneque
The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot

Voting Rights

Say It Louder by Tiffany Cross
One Person, No Vote by Carol Anderson
On Account of Race: the Supreme Court, White Supremacy and the Ravaging of African American Voting Rights by Lawrence Goldstone
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

Economic Justice

The Color of Money: Black Banks and the Racial Wealth Gap by Mehrsa Baradaran
Jackson Rising: the Struggle for Economic Democracy and Black Self-determination in Jackson Mississippi essays edited by Kali Akuno and Ajama Nangwaya
Decolonizing Wealth: Indigenous Wisdom to heal divides and restore balance by Edgar Villaneuva
Race for Profit: How Banks and the Real Estate Industry Undermined Black Homeownership by Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor
The Divide: American Injustice in the Age of the Wealth Gap by Matt Taibbi

White Supremacy

Racecraft: the Soul of Inequality in American Life by Karen E. fields and Barbara J. Fields
Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World and Become a Good Ancestor by Layla Saad and Robin DiAngelo
Stamped from the Beginning: the Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America by Ibram X. Kendi
The Origin of Others by Toni Morrison
White Lies: Race, Class, Gender and Sexuality in White Supremacist Discourse by Jessie Daniels
The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime and the Making of Modern Urban America by Khalil Gibran Muhammad
The False Cause: Fraud, Fabrication and White Supremacy in Confederate Memory by Adam Dombay

Anti-Racism

How to be an Anti-Racist by Ibram X. Kendi
How I Shed My Skin by Tim Wise
America's Original Sin: Racism, White Privilege and the Bridge to a New America by Jim Wallis
Tears We Cannot Stop by Michael Eric Dyson
Anti-Racism: an introduction by Alex Zamalin