

Tools For Fighting Racism In The Leather Community

From white people, for white people

Our Leather community must address racism and taking action isn't easy. Addressing racism as a white person, by putting aside personal defenses to recognize the ways we support white supremacy, can be difficult and uncomfortable work. We must challenge ourselves to acknowledge privilege and how we personally benefit from it. We must check our own biases and call ourselves out on them, even though that may not feel good. We must recognize that we will not dismantle in a day or even a year a system that took centuries to build. But we must and can invest in dismantling white supremacy. Join us!

Moving Towards Action, By Sejal Patel

1. **Realize** the meanings behind privilege, racism and whiteness.
2. **Look within** before you look outward. How do you relate to the definitions? Pinpoint the ways in which you experience privilege as a white person.
3. **Look outward**, find out the historical, global and social patterns of the effects of racism and other forms of oppression.
4. **Act.** Realize that you want to do something about this system, and come at it with a sensitivity and understanding that you come from a privileged background whether you like it or not.



A great place to start is tackling the everyday racism we all encounter in leather communities. Brainstorming responses in community often yields fruitful ideas. Brainstorms like . . .

What can I do...

1. when I am called out/called in?

- Try not to be defensive, simply listen and consider the information offered.
- Remember that fighting racism is a life-long effort - acknowledge mistakes and continue to work on fighting racism in oneself and the community.

2. when I am told the leather community is about sex and play and not social justice?

- Safe, sane and consensual means safe and consensual for all participants
- Social justice is sexy
- Everyone should get to feel safe and sexy
- Both Queer and Leather identities are already politicized
- If we as a community prioritize conversations about safety, we can prioritize conversations about fighting racism as well.
- Make time and space for both

3. when my play partner says or does something that reflects a racist attitude or belief?

- Include your beliefs about racism as part of pre-negotiation
- Address what's necessary in the moment, and then continue the conversation at a better time.
- Say "this makes me feel disconnected to you, and I want to feel connected."
- Use your safeword

4. for events I plan to attend?

- Ask about BIPOC* leadership representation and share that it matters to you. Ask for events/parties to include statements of values or anti-racist intentions
- Offer to assist hosts/promoters in advance of the event to address race and racial issues at the event
- Ask for anti-racist training to be part of workshop and DM trainings

5. when a presenter or community leader makes a racist comment or joke?

- Find some way to interrupt in the moment (say "whoa!" or "ouch!") and then continue the conversation when appropriate. Don't just let racist comments slide.
- To start a conversation, try saying "what you said, to me, means..." and explain why the comment is racist or problematic.

6. to talk with other white people about racism

- Start where you are and learn together
- Approach people as though you're on the same side
- Stay focused on the goal of dismantling white supremacy

7. if I'm interested in playing publicly with themes/props that may be troubling to observers?

- Any scene could be troubling to anyone - it's what we do - but some themes may be especially troublesome: Nazi, race, rape, police or military uniforms, etc.
- Be aware of your surroundings, perhaps choose a more private spot.
- Alert a DM/party host in advance.

8. about racial fetishization?

- Self examination: are you interacting with or pursuing a BIPOC* because the color of their skin (or other racial attributes) gets you off?
- Ask yourself if you are valuing a BIPOC* because of who they are as a person, their morals and values, and what they have to say, or if are you looking at them as an object because of their race.

9. when someone wants to call the police because of a conflict, injury, or other problem at a play party?

- Police intervention doesn't always lead to better safety at events, especially for folks of color who, due to a history of being targeted by police, often don't feel safe with police presence.
- Make sure that all arriving guests know to alert dungeon monitors and/or party hosts ASAP if there is any kind of emergency or problem at a play party.
- Make sure dungeon monitors and party hosts are trained to know when a situation is best handled by in-house facilitators and on-site caregivers or when it is necessary to call for outside medical or police intervention. Most conflicts, injuries and other problems can actually be handled with far less trauma on-site when folks have been trained appropriately.
- If the situation requires police attention, please alert every person at the event that the police are en route, and give folks a chance to do what they need to do to take care of themselves under the circumstances

Continue to come up with your own topics and responses, and here are a few more questions:

10. How do I support BIPOC* in Leather community?

11. When my non-BIPOC* play partner or friend wants us to go to an event billed as QTPoC** event, what can I do or say?

12. How can I keep the conversation going?

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Black Lives Matter: Getting Involved
<http://blacklivesmatter.com/getinvolved/>

Derailing for Dummies:
<https://finallyfeminism101.wordpress.com/resources/mirror-derailing-for-dummies>

"Explaining White Privilege to a Broke White Person," by Gina Crosley-Corcoran
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/gina-crosley-corcoran/explaining-white-privilege-to-a-broke-white-person_b_5269255.html

Catalyst Project:
<http://collectiveliberation.org>

From White Racist to White Anti-Racist: The Lifelong Journey
by Tema Okun, dRworks 2006, <http://www.dismantlingracism.org>

Herstory of #BlackLivesMatter Movement by Alicia Garza
<http://thefeministwire.com/2014/10/blacklivesmatter-2>

The Perverted Negress:
<http://www.mollena.com/>

Racial Equality Tools:
<https://www.raciaequalitytools.org/home>

Resources from Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ):
<http://www.showingupforracialjustice.org/resources>

Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice,
by Paul Kivel (2011)

White Noise Collective FaceBook group
<https://www.facebook.com/The-White-Noise-Collective-141035709272499/>

"Why White People Freak Out When They Are Called Out About Race," by Sam Adler-Bell (interview with Robin DiAngelo): <http://www.alternet.org/culture/why-white-people-freak-out-when-theyre-called-out-about-race>

"White Fragility," <http://libjournal.uncg.edu/index.php/ijcp/article/view/249/116>

"White Privilege, Explained in One Easy Comic," by Jamie Kapp
<http://everydayfeminism.com/2014/09/white-privilege-explained>

We believe these basic assumptions are necessary as a starting place for this work:

1. White people have power and privilege due to being white
2. Society essentially functions as white space, and BIPOC separate space is valid
3. Trust BIPOC individuals regarding their own experiences
4. Recognize the systemic presence of racism
5. Get out of guilt mode as guilt creates paralysis and deflects responsibility
6. Being "Colorblind" means that you are ignoring how race functions in our communities. Colorblind serves to functions as assimilation, rather than recognizing and valuing our differences

Created as a tool for discussion in a workshop at IMsL 2016, "Non-POC Caucus," facilitated by Dr. Fruity, boy sue, Kentucky Fried Woman, and Rocket.

© 2016 antiracistkink@gmail.com. Please request permission to reprint and distribute this document in its entirety - partial use, or edited use, is not permitted. For a printable version of this flyer, download here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B7CzLmMiN2ZbGxyVohsQitfbEo/view?usp=sharing>

* BIPOC = Black, Indigenous, People of Color

**QTPoC = Queer, Trans, People of Color