

## LESSON 1

## RESTORATIVE JUSTICE, EMPATHY, AND LOVING ENGAGEMENT

**BLACK LIVES MATTER**

## ESSENTIAL QUESTION

*Why are the principles around engagement integral to the Black Lives Matter movement?*

- Restorative Justice
- Loving Engagement
- Empathy



## STANDARDS

This lesson does not focus on HCPSS curricula or MSDE content standards, it is founded in the Black Lives Matter at School 2020 Week of Action. Therefore, it focuses on the foundation and history of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, introduces the guiding principles of the BLM movement, and focuses on the principles BLM has identified for focus on day one.



## STUDENT OUTCOMES

- I can articulate the history of the Black Lives Matter Movement.
- I can identify with principles of the Black Lives Matter Movement.



## INTRODUCTION

### LESSON LAUNCH/WARM-UP:

Invite students to share any associations they have with the phrase "Black Lives Matter." Chart their associations in a web or other visual representation. Elicit associations while interest remains high, then invite students to look over the web and discuss it using some or all of the following questions:

- What do you notice about what's written on the chart?
- Are there any similarities? Differences?
- Is there anything on here that surprises you?
- Is there anything on here that you have questions about?

Explain that in today's lesson students will be looking more closely at the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter and the movement that sprang from it.

Elicit and explain that over the past few years, police violence against mostly young men of color has entered the mainstream news cycle with great immediacy. Video footage, shot mostly on private cellphones and broadcast on social media, has helped bring to light what communities of color have long been trying to expose - what Black Lives Matter calls "the virulent anti-Black racism that permeates our society" (<http://blacklivesmatter.com/about/>).

Through Twitter and the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter, activists were able to disseminate information directly to millions of people, bypassing the traditional mainstream media, which, until Black Lives Matter, had mostly ignored police violence in black communities.

#BlackLivesMatter turned names like Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Walter Scott, Freddie Grey, and Philando Castile into household names while raising awareness beyond communities of color about the systemic racism and structural inequality that black and brown Americans experience on a daily basis. As the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag gained momentum, it soon turned into a movement that continues to grow and evolve to face and address real world needs, beyond the digital world it sprang from.



## LESSON

## TWEET ANALYSIS ACTIVITY:

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Break students into small groups and give each group a copy of the [📄 these #BLM tweets \(https://hcpss.instructure.com/courses/341/files/14807454/download?wrap=1\)](https://hcpss.instructure.com/courses/341/files/14807454/download?wrap=1). Ask them to discuss these questions in their groups:

- What are your thoughts and feelings about these tweets?
- What do you think they are in reference to?
- What do you know about #BlackLivesMatter and why it was created?

## QUOTE ANALYSIS ACTIVITY:

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Print [📄 these quotes \(https://hcpss.instructure.com/courses/341/files/14807453/download?wrap=1\)](https://hcpss.instructure.com/courses/341/files/14807453/download?wrap=1) and invite volunteers to read them loud.

Divide students into small groups to discuss the following questions:

- What are your thoughts and feelings about Black Lives Matter, based on this information?
- What did you learn about Black Lives Matter that you didn't know before?
- What questions do you have about #BlackLivesMatter, the hashtag, and Black Lives Matter, the movement?

Back in the large group invite students to share out some of the points that were made in their small groups and facilitate a large group discussion around the issues raised.

## PRINCIPLES ANALYSIS ACTIVITY:

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*Note: Depending on the work you've done with your group, you may consider reviewing the meaning of the words used in the principles, or only use the principles you think students will already understand. Alternatively, let students experience the activity without this advance preparation, but encourage them to share their questions as the activity suggests. Make sure you return to these questions as the group continues to convene.*

Print out a copy of these [📄 Black Lives Matter principles \(https://hcpss.instructure.com/courses/341/files/14807022/download?wrap=1\)](https://hcpss.instructure.com/courses/341/files/14807022/download?wrap=1). Post the principles around the room. Explain that these principles are at the core of the BLM movement.

Ask students to define what a principle is. Elicit and explain that a principle, according to Merriam-Webster, is

- a moral rule or belief that helps you know what is right and wrong and that influences your actions
- a basic truth or theory : an idea that forms the basis of something

Ask students to think about a particular community, whether it's their own school community, the neighborhood or city they live in or the U.S. at large. In this context, ask them what principle are they most drawn to, for whatever reason. It could be because they have questions about it, because they feel this is the most important principle in the given context, or because they think that the school, neighborhood, city, or country should do a better job upholding this principle.

Invite students to stand by the principle they feel most drawn to. In the small groups now standing by different principles, invite students to discuss among themselves some or all of the following questions:

- Why were they drawn to this principle?
- What is it about this principle that spoke to them?
- What questions do they have about this principle?
- How do they see it relating to other principles around the room?
- Why do they think Black Lives Matter felt the need to explicitly create a page on their website that outlines these principles?

Invite each small group to share out, in no more than a minute, the key points of what they discussed. Then convene the whole group to discuss the principles as a set, going back to the last two questions on the list above. Link the discussion back to the community you had students relate these principles to.

## THEME INTRODUCTION:

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Explain to students that every day of the Black Lives Matter at School Week of Action is based on specific themes from the principles. Today's theme is **Restorative Justice, Empathy, and Loving Engagement**. Ask students standing near these principles to read out their descriptions and then ask students:

- Why are these three principles singled out for day one?
- Why are these principles integral to learning about and talking about BLM this week?
- How will we as a class choose to exhibit these principles in the coming lessons?









## CLOSURE


Summarize the discussions had by students and then invite students to come up with any questions they have about Black Lives Matter.

*Note: As with any discussion of a controversial issue it is imperative that teachers have the opportunity to summarize, clarify, and conclude small group and whole class conversations. Make sure that you have had a chance to clarify any misconceptions, explicitly articulate the purpose of the lesson, and explain how you will be proceeding over the course of the week.*



## LESSON RESOURCES

-  [BLM Quotes \(https://hcpss.instructure.com/courses/341/files/14807453/download?wrap=1\)](https://hcpss.instructure.com/courses/341/files/14807453/download?wrap=1)  
  [\(https://hcpss.instructure.com/courses/341/files/14807453/download?wrap=1\)](https://hcpss.instructure.com/courses/341/files/14807453/download?wrap=1)
-  [BLM Tweets \(https://hcpss.instructure.com/courses/341/files/14807454/download?wrap=1\)](https://hcpss.instructure.com/courses/341/files/14807454/download?wrap=1)  
  [\(https://hcpss.instructure.com/courses/341/files/14807454/download?wrap=1\)](https://hcpss.instructure.com/courses/341/files/14807454/download?wrap=1)
-  [BLM Principles Posters](#)  
 [\(https://hcpss.instructure.com/courses/341/files/14807022/download?wrap=1\)](https://hcpss.instructure.com/courses/341/files/14807022/download?wrap=1)   
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