

Transformative Equity x Social Emotional Learning

5 Focal Constructs





Oakland Unified for Racial Justice

Racial Affinity Circle Space

Racial Justice & Healing Taskforce



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COURAGEOUS CONVERSATION ABOUT RACE PROTOCOL



COURAGEOUS CONVERSATION IS UTILIZING THE FOUR AGREEMENTS, SIX CONDITIONS AND COMPASS IN ORDER TO ENGAGE, SUSTAIN AND DEEPEN INTERNAL, INTRA-RACIAL, AND INTER-RACIAL DIALOGUE ABOUT RACE, AND IS AN ESSENTIAL FOUNDATION FOR EXAMINING AND ADDRESSING INSTITUTIONALIZED CULTURE AND STRUCTURES THAT PROMOTE RACIAL DISPARITIES.

THE COMPASS



FOUR AGREEMENTS

- STAY ENGAGED
- EXPERIENCE DISCOMFORT
- SPEAK YOUR TRUTH
- EXPECT / ACCEPT NON-CLOSURE

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SIX CONDITIONS

1. FOCUS ON THE PERSONAL, LOCAL AND IMMEDIATE
2. ISOLATE RACE
3. NORMALIZE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION AND MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES
4. MONITOR AGREEMENTS AND CONDITIONS; ESTABLISH PARAMETERS
5. USE A "WORKING" DEFINITION OF RACE
6. EXAMINE THE PRESENCE AND ROLE OF WHITENESS



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“It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences.” – Audre Lorde

What is an affinity group?

An affinity group is a small group of people who affirm & support each other, and work together to change the world.

Acting alone, we may feel powerless to create real change. An affinity group can provide practical support as well as inspiration, motivation, and fun. Your affinity group might work together to prepare for a particular direct action, or it might stick together for years.

What is a Racial Affinity group?

The term affinity group is used as a bringing together of people who have an identifier in common, e.g. race, gender, religion, family status etc. Affinity Groups are for individuals who identify as members of the group and can speak to the experience of being a member of the group from the 'I' perspective to take action.

Racial affinity groups are designed specifically to encourage interaction among members of the same racial or ethnic background. Although each of us may lay claim to multiple identities, racial/ethnic affinity group sessions call participants into community & action based on their individual racial & ethnic identity.




Racial Affinity Groups & Supportively Challenging Ourselves

“As a teacher of color, I never had an experience in any racial affinity group in a professional setting. But after I experienced it once, I realized how important it is to have opportunities to enter a brave space with people who look like me. It is important that we acknowledge that we live in a white supremacist culture which means that it’s often not safe for teachers of color to share and be vulnerable when it comes to matters dealing with race and identity. Therefore, I felt that it was important for everyone to have an experience of affirmation and being heard for who they are.

What is right and what is valued is the “white” way. A lot of us have internalized and compared ourselves to those white standards. When you ask people to bring up things that are personal it is powerful to be able to share that with people who look like you and to be seen for who you are.”

~Malia Tayabas-Kim, Lead by Learning Program Associate, former Oakland Unified second-grade teacher and SEL teacher leader



What is the purpose of Racial Affinity Groups in OUSD?

1. To facilitate opportunities for **affirming**, nurturing, and celebrating lived experience;
2. Discussing issues related to racial/ethnic identity in a **safe environment** where people who share that racial or ethnic identity can generate community, fellowship, and empowerment;
3. Envisioning and sharing **strategies** to create greater racial and ethnic equity, inclusion, belonging, navigation & language;
4. Using your amplified voice for **collective action** to eradicate white supremacy, racism & oppression in our district.

Why We Caucus...

“In integrated spaces, **patterns of white dominance** are inevitable. These patterns include things like being legitimized for using academic language, an expectation of “getting it right” (i.e., perfectionism), **fear of open conflict**, **scapegoating** those who cause discomfort, and a sense of **urgency** that takes precedence over inclusion.”

Why We Caucus...

“People of color are often so familiar with navigating white spaces that even when there’s a possibility of bringing more of ourselves into a room, we simply don’t know how. We’ve **assimilated** to white cultural conditioning, and that assimilation has become part of our identity. While this can help us “get ahead,” the compromise is that **we forget what it feels like to be our whole selves.**”

Why We Caucus...

These caucus spaces aren't acts of oppression, but rather responses to it.

They are our opportunity to be with each other away from the abuses of racism and **our fears**. Given that space to breathe, there's a possibility of **healing**. Being together can offer resiliency for **bringing our fullness** into integrated spaces.

Why We Caucus...

“We have to ask the questions we’re afraid to ask. We have to be with the things we’re afraid to allow. We meet **fear** with **gentleness**, and in doing so practice fearlessness. Let us not avoid the sharp edges of reality...”

What might be the impact of Racial Affinity Groups on OUSD (district, schools & system)?



- Building **individual capacity** for conversations about race, and deepening the understanding of the systemic drivers of racial inequities.
- Learning ways to **interrupt** racism and the characteristics of white supremacy in the culture of the district, schools and departments.
- Identifying and **dismantling** all forms of racism including anti-Black racism that exist in our work in schools and in our district.
- **Healing** from oppressive racialized messages of white supremacy and/or internalized inferiority that are dominant in the our organizational culture (schools & district) and revealed in group and individual interactions.

What might be the impact of Racial Affinity Groups on OUSD (district, schools & system)?



- Supporting the **retainment**, empowerment and sustainability of BIPOC staff in schools, classrooms and district spaces.
- Identifying what needs to **change** to retain, sustain and promote leadership and power (resources, decision-making, etc.) among BIPOC staff in OUSD.
- Naming what each identity group **needs to do** to support the thriving of BIPOC staff, families and students in our school system.



OUSD RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

Tapping into the power of community connection.

Our Community Agreements



- Respect the Talking Piece / One Mic
- Speak & Listen with Respect
- Speak & Listen from your Heart
- Remain in the Circle (Stay Engaged)
- Honor Privacy



What value are you holding for this space & this work?

You can choose one above, or share another value/principle that is important to you for this space.

Affinity Group Round 1:

- **Name** - What's the story of your name?
- **Place** - Where are your ancestors from?
- **Intention** - Draw a hope or value that you want to bring into this space & into our work together around racial justice this year?

Affinity Group Round 2:

- How long have you been here in Oakland?
- **How have our racial identity *(and other intersectional identities)* shaped our experience in OUSD?**

Understanding Our
Relationship to

Power

&

Acting in

Solidarity

Across Our
Different
Experiences



Affinity Group Round 3:

- How do my identities shape insight, bias or blinders as I relate to my students, families and other staff?

Fishbowl Activity:

- Sharing our **Values**
- What do we want **others to know** about our racial identity & experience?
 - What are some of our **hopes & fears** around sharing?
- What **ideas** do you have for this work this year?

Courageous Conversations Protocol

Group Agreements:

Stay engaged

Speak your truth

Experience Discomfort

Expect and accept non-closure





SAFETY
VS
COMFORT

Next Steps!

- Self-Care
- Self-Organized Monthly Spaces:
 - Community Building
 - Antiracism/anti-oppression work
- OUSD Racial Affinity Retreats & Teaching Well Affinity Spaces

Loving Kindness

Mindful Moments w/ JusTme

[Link to Vimeo Video](#)