



Seattle Public Schools
Black Lives Matter Week Lesson Plan
A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement
By Alicia Garza
Pictures by Bruce Jackson

LESSON TITLE: A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement

Washington state content or practice standard:

Civics

1.4.1 Understands that civic participation involves being informed about how public issues are related to rights and responsibilities.

History

4.1.1 Understands and creates timelines to show how historical events are caused by other important events.

4.2.1 Understands and analyzes how individuals caused change in U.S. history.

Social Studies Skills

5.1.1 Understands the purpose of documents and the concepts used in them.

5.1.2 Evaluates the relevance of facts used in forming a position on an issue or event.

5.2.1 Understands how essential questions define the significance of researching an issue or event.

5.4.1 Researches multiple perspectives to take a position on a public or historical issue in a paper or presentation.

5.4.2 Prepares a list of resources, including the title, author, type of source, date published, and publisher for each source, and arranges the sources alphabetically.

Other content standard reference:

Lesson Overview: The student will take a deep dive into A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement. They will search for the vocabulary words on each

page to reach a deeper understanding of this important, but difficult to understand article.

Knowledge: students will know that...

- In spite of this nation's treatment of black lives, Black Lives Matter
- There are 13 principles in the Black Lives Matter Movement that lead to a better life for all people
- There are four demands that will make fundamental, positive changes in the way that we educate children of color

Skills:

- SWBAT create a poster that give their view of an issue
- SWBAT speak on an important issue to the entire school
- SWBAT participate in a movement for change

Essential Questions/Big Idea: to guide unit/lesson discussions and student reflections

- How can I and/or my community navigate the government to advocate for ourselves and others?
- How do I change the Local, State, and Federal Government?
- How do we challenge/question things that are fair/unfair?
- What has been done in the past?
- What can we do today?
- What can be gained from our acts?
- What could be lost if we act?
- What different choices do we have to address injustices?

Formative assessment along the way:

Finding definitions from dictionary

Reading definitions to increase understanding of materials

Summative assessment of learnings:

Learning Plan – sequence of experiences/activities/engagement students will have to attain knowledge/skills:

1. Hand a page of the presentation below to each student in class. Double up for pages with more content.
2. Have each students find the definitions to each underlined word in the presentation
3. Write the definitions on a sticky note
4. Help the students understand each word or term through classroom discussion.
5. Have the students read their definitions aloud before the classroom.
6. Then have that student copy the word to the whiteboard
7. Have each student read and explain their page
8. Discuss each page

Public product or performance that will demonstrate student learning:

Read in front of class

Text / Electronic Resource/Materials:

<https://blacklivesmatteratschool.com/>

13 Core Principles of Black Lives Matter Week

1. Diversity-We are committed to acknowledging, respecting and celebrating difference(s) and commonalities

2. Globalism-We see ourselves as part of the global Black family and we are aware of the different ways we are impacted or privileged as Black folk who exist in different parts of the world

3. Black Women-We are committed to building a Black women affirming space free from sexism, misogyny, and male-centeredness

4. Black Villages-We are committed to disrupting the Western-prescribed nuclear family structure requirement by supporting each other as extended families and “villages” that collectively care for one another, and especially “our” children to the degree that mothers, parents and children are comfortable

5. Loving Engagement-We are committed to embodying and practicing justice, liberation, and peace in our engagements with one another

6. Restorative Justice-We are committed to collectively, lovingly and courageously working vigorously for freedom and justice for Black people and, by extension all people. As we forge our path, we intentionally build and nurture a beloved community that is bonded together through a beautiful struggle that is restorative, not depleting

7. Collective value-We are guided by the fact all Black lives, regardless of actual or perceived sexual identity, gender identity, gender expression, economic status, ability, disability, religious beliefs or disbeliefs, immigration status or location

8. Empathy-We are committed to practicing empathy; we engage comrades with the intent to learn about and connect with their contexts

9. Queer Affirming-We are committed to fostering a queer-affirming network. When we gather, we do so with the intention of freeing ourselves from the tight grip of heteronormative thinking or, rather, the belief that all in the world are heterosexual unless s/he or they disclose otherwise

10. Unapologetically black-We are unapologetically Black in our positioning. In affirming that Black Lives Matter, we need not qualify our position. To love and desire freedom and justice for ourselves is a necessary prerequisite for wanting the same for others

11. Transgender affirming-We are committed to embracing and making space for trans brothers and sisters to participate and lead. We are committed to being self-reflexive and doing the work required to dismantle cisgender privilege and uplift Black trans folk, especially Black trans women who continue to be disproportionately impacted by trans-antagonistic violence

12. Black families-We are committed to making our spaces family-friendly and enable parents to fully participate with their children. We are committed to dismantling the patriarchal practice that requires mothers to work “double shifts” that require them to mother in private even as they participate in justice work

13. Intergenerational-We are committed to fostering an intergenerational and communal network free from ageism. We believe that all people, regardless of age, shows up with capacity to lead and learn

Demands

End Zero-tolerance policies that require **school** officials to give students a specific, consistent, and harsh punishment, usually suspension or expulsion, when certain rules are broken. ... **Zero-tolerance policies** were written into **school** handbooks in the 1990s, created originally to be a deterrent for bringing weapons into **schools**.

Implement Restorative Justice that empowers students to resolve conflicts on their own and in small groups, and it's a growing practice at schools around the country. Essentially, the idea is to bring students together in peer-mediated small groups to talk, ask questions, and air their grievances.

Hire More Educators of Color. Teachers of color make up [less than 20 percent of the teaching workforce](#) at a time when students of color, once called minority students, are now decidedly the majority in K-12 classrooms. In fact, every single state in the country has a higher percentage of students of color than teachers of color, and more than 40 percent of public schools don't employ a single non-white teacher.

Mandate black history and ethnic studies in K-12 curriculum. Seattle Public Schools strongly believes that its curriculum must represent ALL the peoples of the United States, especially those who have been historically marginalized. Our firm conviction is that students whose history and heritage is respected, appreciated and celebrated will learn better and attain positive outcomes. Whether incorporated into general coursework or taught as the exploration of individual communities, ethnic studies have positive benefits to every Seattle student.

Counselors Not Cops.

1. End the Regular Presence of Law Enforcement in Schools

We are calling for removal of any law enforcement personnel assigned to be present on a regular basis in schools, including sworn officers (and unsworn if they are armed security), municipal police officers, school police officers, school resource officers (SROs), sheriff's

deputies, parole and probation officers, tribal officers, truancy officers, ICE officers or other immigration officials and armed security guards.

2. Create Safe Schools through Positive Safety and Discipline Measures

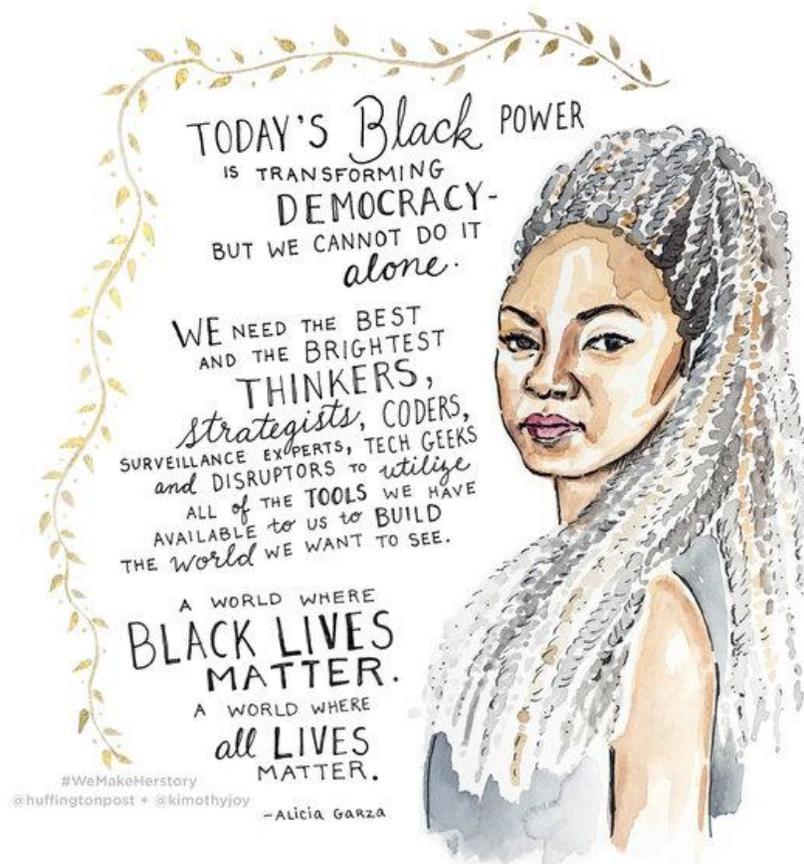
Instead, school staff trained to ensure safe and positive school climates, such as community intervention workers, peacebuilders, behavior interventionists, transformative or restorative justice coordinators, school aides, counselors and other support staff, can and do prevent and address safety concerns and conflicts. These staff monitor school entrances and ensure a welcoming environment, respond to the root causes of conflict and disruptive behaviors, prevent and intervene to stop intergroup and interethnic tension, and address students' needs.

3. Restrict the Role of Law Enforcement that are Called in to Schools

On those rare occasions when it is appropriate for law enforcement to enter a school building, there should be agreements with police departments that limit the cases when law enforcement can be called in to a school, with particular safeguards in place to ensure students' rights to education and dignity are protected, in addition to their constitutional rights to counsel and due process.

Background information needed:

Notes:



A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement by Alicia Garza



Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi

I created [#BlackLivesMatter](#) with Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi, two of my sisters, as a call to action for Black people after 17-year-old Trayvon Martin was posthumously placed on trial for his own murder and the killer, George Zimmerman, was not held accountable for the crime he committed. It was a response to the anti-Black racism that permeates our society and also, unfortunately, our movements.



Black Lives Matter is an ideological and political intervention in a world where Black lives are systematically and intentionally targeted for demise. It is an affirmation of Black folks' contributions to this society, our humanity, and our resilience in the face of deadly oppression.



Malcolm X, Alicia Garza, W.E.B. Dubois, Huey P. Newton & others

We were humbled when cultural workers, artists, designers and techies offered their labor and love to expand #BlackLivesMatter beyond a social media hashtag. Opal, Patrisse, and I created the infrastructure for this movement project—moving the hashtag from social media to the streets. Our team grew through a very successful Black Lives Matter ride, led and designed by Patrisse Cullors and Darnell L. Moore, organized to support the movement that is growing in St. Louis, MO, after 18-year old Mike Brown was killed at the hands of Ferguson Police Officer Darren Wilson. We've hosted national conference calls focused on issues of critical importance to Black people working hard for the liberation of our people. We've connected people across the country working to end the various forms of injustice impacting our people. We've created space for the celebration and humanization of Black lives.



My name is my own my own my own and I can't tell you who the hell set things up like this but I can tell you that from now on my resistance my simple and daily and nightly self-determination may very well cost you your life"(tattoo)

As people took the [#BlackLivesMatter](#) demand into the streets, mainstream media and corporations also took up the call, [#BlackLivesMatter](#) appeared in an episode of *Law & Order: SVU* in a mash up containing the Paula Deen racism scandal and the tragedy of the murder of Trayvon Martin.



Suddenly, we began to come across varied adaptations of our work-all lives matter, brown lives matter, migrant lives matter, women's lives matter, and on and on. While imitation is said to be the highest form of flattery, I was surprised when an organization called to ask if they could use "Black Lives Matter" in one of their campaigns. We agreed to it, with the caveat that a) as a team, we preferred that we not use the meme to celebrate the imprisonment of any individual and b) that it as important to us they acknowledged the genesis of #BlackLivesMatter.



Kylie Jenner Pepsi Ad

I was surprised when they did exactly the opposite and then justified their actions by saying they hadn't used the "exact" slogan and, therefore, they deemed it okay to take our work, use it as their own, fail to credit where it came from, and then use it to applaud incarceration.



Alicia Garza and husband Malachi

I was surprised when a community institution wrote asking us to provide materials and action steps for an art show they were curating, entitled "Our Lives Matter." When questioned about who was involved and why they felt the need to change the very specific call and demand around Black lives to "our lives," I was told the artists decided it needed to be more inclusive of all people of color. I was even more surprised when, in the promotion of their event, one of the artists conducted an interview that completely erased the origins of their work-rooted in the labor and love of queer Black women.

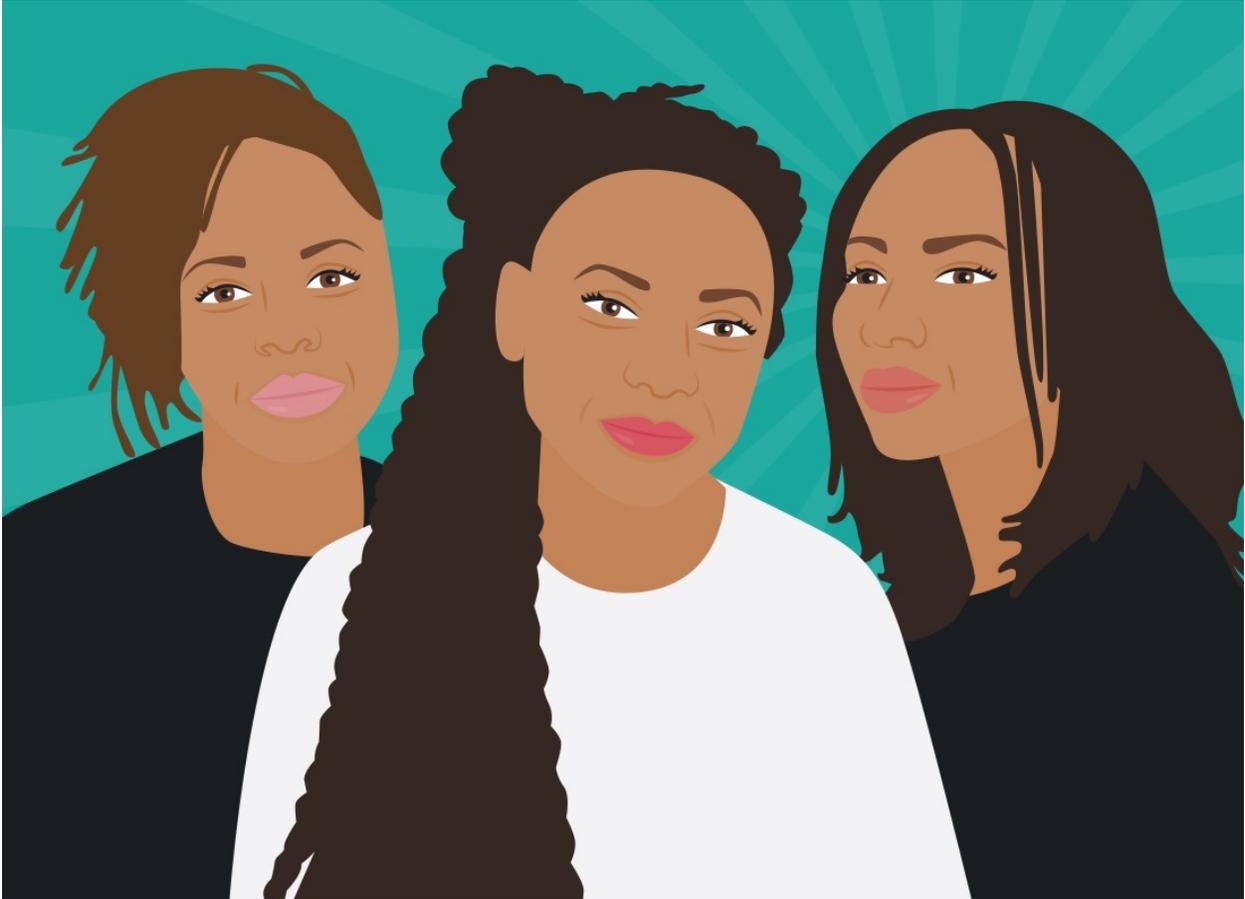


Alicia Garza and husband Malachi

When you design an event / campaign / et cetera based on the work of queer Black women, don't invite them to participate in shaping it, but ask them to provide materials and ideas for next steps for said event, that is racism in practice. It's also hetero-patriarchal. Straight men, unintentionally or intentionally, have taken the work of queer Black women and erased our contributions. Perhaps if we were the charismatic Black men many are rallying around these days, it would have been a different story, but being Black queer women in this society (and apparently within these movements) tends to equal invisibility and non-relevancy.



We completely expect those who benefit directly and improperly from White supremacy to try and erase our existence. We fight that every day. But when it happens amongst our allies, we are baffled, we are saddened, and we are enraged. And it's time to have the political conversation about why that's not okay.



We are grateful to our [allies](#) who have stepped up to the call that Black lives matter, and taken it as an opportunity to not just stand in [solidarity](#) with us, but to investigate the ways in which anti-Black racism is perpetuated in their own communities. We are also grateful to those allies who were willing to engage in critical dialogue with us about this unfortunate and problematic dynamic. And for those who we have not yet had the opportunity to engage with around the adaptations of the Black Lives Matter call, please consider the following points.



Black Lives Matter is a unique contribution that goes beyond extrajudicial killings of Black people by police and vigilantes. It goes beyond the narrow nationalism that can be prevalent within some Black communities, which merely call on Black people to love Black, live Black and buy Black, keeping straight cis Black men in the front of the movement while our sisters, queer and trans and disabled folk take up roles in the background or not at all.



Alicia Garza with other queer activists

Black Lives Matter affirms the lives of Black queer and trans folks, disabled folks, Black-undocumented folks, folks with records, women and all Black lives along the gender spectrum. It centers those that have been marginalized within Black liberation movements. It is a tactic to (re)build the Black liberation movement.



When we say *Black Lives Matter*, we are talking about the ways in which Black people are deprived of our basic human rights and dignity. It is an acknowledgement Black poverty and genocide is state violence.



It is an acknowledgment that 1 million Black people are locked in cages in this country-one half of all people in prisons or jails-is an act of state violence.



It is an acknowledgment that Black women continue to bear the burden of a relentless assault on our children and our families and that assault is an act of state violence.



Black queer and trans folks bearing a unique burden in a hetero-patriarchal society that disposes of us like garbage and simultaneously fetishizes us and profits off of us is state violence;



the fact that 500,000 Black people in the US are undocumented immigrants and relegated to the shadows is state violence; the fact that Black girls are used as negotiating chips during times of conflict and war is state violence;



Leon Ford

Black folks living with disabilities and different abilities bear the burden of state-sponsored Darwinian experiments that attempt to squeeze us into boxes of normality defined by White supremacy is state violence. And the fact is that the lives of Black people—not ALL people—exist within these conditions is consequence of state violence.



students lay down to demonstrate the police killings in 2015

#BlackLivesMatter doesn't mean your life isn't important-it means that Black lives, which are seen as without value within White supremacy, are important to your liberation. Given the disproportionate impact state violence has on Black lives, we understand that when Black people in this country get free, the benefits will be wide reaching and transformative for society as a whole.



Hands up, Don't shoot

When we are able to end hyper-criminalization and sexualization of Black people and end the poverty, control, and surveillance of Black people, every single person in this world has a better shot at getting and staying free. When Black people get free, everybody gets free. This is why we call on Black people and our allies to take up the call that Black lives matter. We're not saying Black lives are more important than other lives, or that other lives are not criminalized and oppressed in various ways. We remain in active solidarity with all oppressed people who are fighting for their liberation and we know that our destinies are intertwined.



And, to keep it real-it is appropriate and necessary to have strategy and action centered around Blackness without other non-Black communities of color, or White folks for that matter, needing to find a place and a way to center themselves within it. It is appropriate and necessary for us to acknowledge the critical role that Black lives and struggles for Black liberation have played in inspiring and anchoring, through practice and theory, social movements for the liberation of all people. The women's movement, the Chicano liberation movement, queer movements, and many more have adopted the strategies, tactics and theory of the Black liberation movement. And if we are committed to a world where all lives matter, we are called to support the very movement that inspired and activated so many more. That means supporting and acknowledging Black lives.



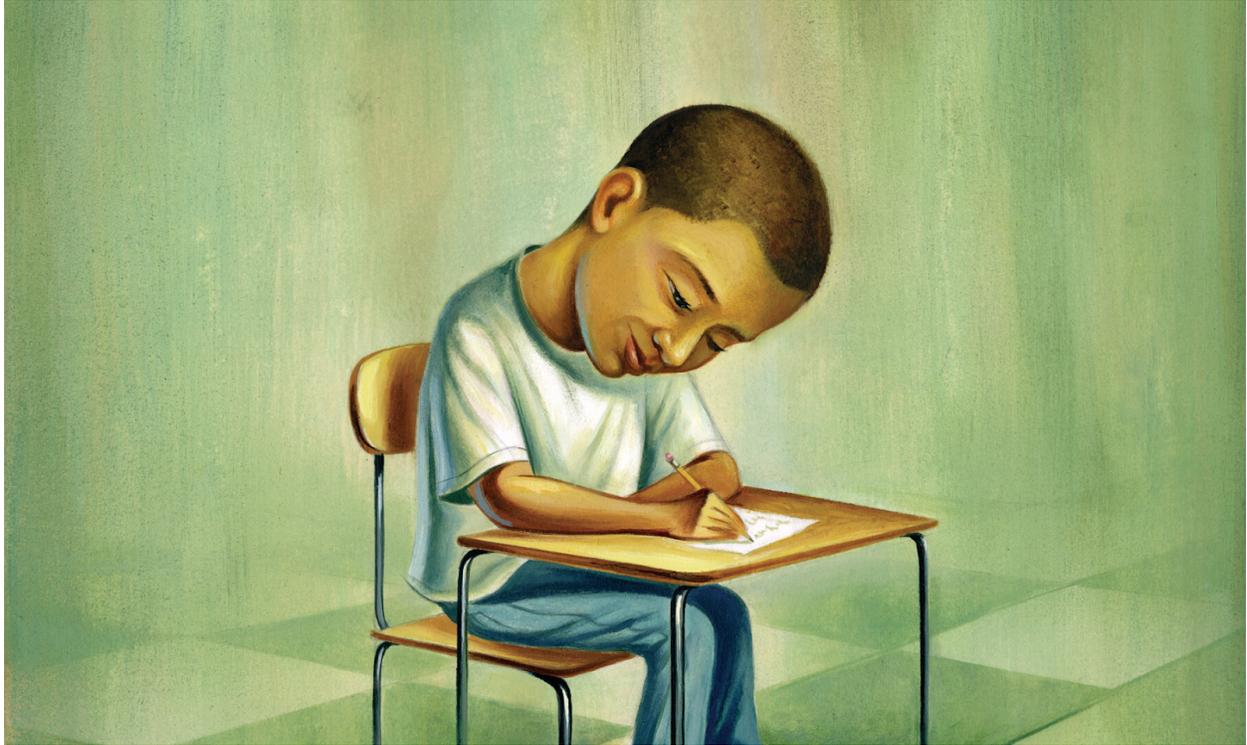
Progressive movements in the United States have made some unfortunate errors when they push for unity at the expense of really understanding the concrete differences in context, experience and oppression. In other words, some want unity without struggle. As people who have our minds stayed on freedom, we can learn to fight anti-Black racism by examining the ways in which we participate in it, even unintentionally, instead of the worn out and sloppy practice of drawing lazy parallels of unity between peoples with vastly different experiences and histories.



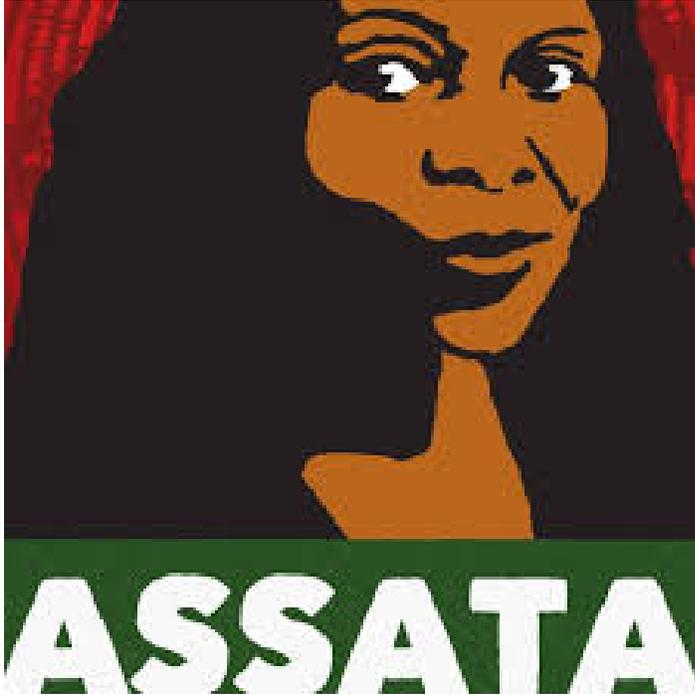
When we deploy "All Lives Matter" as to correct an intervention specifically created to address anti-blackness,, we lose the ways in which the state apparatus has built a program of genocide and repression mostly on the backs of Black people—beginning with the theft of millions of people for free labor—and then adapted it to control, murder, and profit off of other communities of color and immigrant communities.



We perpetuate a level of White supremacist domination by reproducing a tired trope that we are all the same, rather than acknowledging that non-Black oppressed people in this country are both impacted by racism and domination, and simultaneously, BENEFIT from anti-black racism.



When you drop "Black" from the equation of whose lives matter, and then fail to acknowledge it came from somewhere, you further a legacy of erasing Black lives and Black contributions from our movement legacy. And consider whether or not when dropping the Black you are, intentionally or unintentionally, erasing Black folks from the conversation or homogenizing very different experiences. The legacy and prevalence of anti-Black racism and hetero-patriarchy is a lynch pin holding together this unsustainable economy. And that's not an accidental analogy.



Assata Shakur

In 2014, hetero-patriarchy and anti-Black racism within our movement is real and felt. It's killing us and it's killing our potential to build power for transformative social change. When you adopt the work of queer women of color, don't name or recognize it, and promote it as if it has no history of its own such actions are problematic. When I use Assata's powerful demand in my organizing work, I always begin by sharing where it comes from, sharing about Assata's significance to the Black Liberation Movement, what it's political purpose and message is, and why it's important in our context.



When you adopt Black Lives Matter and transform it into something else (if you feel you really need to do that-see above for the arguments not to), it's appropriate politically to credit the lineage from which your adapted work derived. It's important that we work together to build and acknowledge the legacy of Black contributions to the struggle for human rights. If you adapt Black Lives Matter, use the opportunity to talk about its inception and political framing. Lift up Black lives as an opportunity to connect struggles across race, class, gender, nationality, sexuality and disability.



Trayvon Martin

And, perhaps more importantly, when Black people cry out in defense of our lives, which are uniquely, systematically, and savagely targeted by the state, we are asking you, our family, to stand with us in affirming Black lives. Not just all lives. Black lives. Please do not change the conversation by talking about how your life matters, too. It does, but we need less watered down unity and a more active solidarities with us, Black people, unwaveringly, in defense of our humanity. Our collective futures depend on it.

The End



Alicia Garza is the Special Projects Director for the National Domestic Workers Alliance. She has been the recipient of multiple awards for her organizing work in Black and Latino communities, receiving the Local Hero award from the San Francisco Bay Guardian and the Jeanne Gauna Communicate Justice award from the Center for Media Justice in 2008. She has twice been honored by the Harvey Milk Democratic Club with the Bayard Rustin Community Activist award for her work fighting gentrification and environmental racism in San Francisco's largest remaining Black community.

Alicia comes to NDWA after serving as Executive Director of People Organized to Win Employment Rights (POWER) in San Francisco since 2009. Under her leadership, POWER won free local public transportation for youth; fought for a seat at the table in some of the most important land use decisions affecting working-class families; beat back regressive local policies targeting undocumented people; organized against the chronic police violence in Black neighborhoods; and shed light on the ongoing wave of profit-driven development that contribute to a changing San Francisco.

In 2013, Alicia co-founded #BlackLivesMatter, an online platform developed after the murder of Trayvon Martin, designed to connect people interested in learning more about and fighting back against anti-Black racism.

Alicia currently serves on the Board of Directors for the School of Unity and Liberation (SOUL) in Oakland, California, and is a contributing writer for WarTimes magazine. She serves as trusted counsel for organizations across the country looking to build their capacity to lead and win organizing campaigns. When she's not scheming on freedom, Alicia enjoys dancing, reading and writing—and scheming some more.