

Anti-Racism Curriculum for Reclaiming Groups

This is an open-hearted invitation to Reclaiming communities, covens, camps, and other groups to tackle the big issues of race, racism, anti-racism, and decolonization. This resource outlines a participatory workshop, with readings, videos, and discussion questions throughout. If you are facilitating this workshop, please read through the entire document first, then feel free to pick and choose which items your group will focus on, based on the group's composition, interests, level of understanding, and time. Hopefully all groups -- from the 101 level on up -- will find something valuable to spark discussion here.

Depending on the nature of the group, you might wish to create sacred space or use other techniques such as icebreakers, rounds, or small-group activities to build relationships and trust between community members and thus create a reflective space for listening within and without, a safe(r) space for speaking truth, a brave space for taking risks and daring to make mistakes.

Doing anti-racist work can be tricky and may require strong facilitation skills. Facilitators might want to work in pairs or teams or rotate leadership. We are hoping that members of the Reclaiming community will find ways to support each other in this work.

Facilitators, be aware of who's in the room. Are there BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) in a majority-white group? Frame your conversations to not leave out BIPOC and mixed-race people. Don't assume that the default perspective is a white perspective. Ask BIPOC directly what they need to feel supported. BIPOC might want to create their own group and do their own focused work separate from white folks. BIPOC should never be expected to do the labor of educating white people.

The resources in this document focus mostly on the so-called United States, although the concepts and ideas can often be applied to other lands. We encourage you to do place-specific research on the land you call home. Thank you for taking action and doing the tough, necessary work of unlearning racism and working towards a more just society.

This document was created by members of DARC: Decolonizing Actions in Reclaiming Communities.

Please feel free to give us feedback by emailing DARCreclaiming@gmail.com. Put "Feedback for Anti-Racism Curriculum" in the subject field. Feedback will be reviewed and the document edited approximately twice a year.

"No one is free until we are all free." -- Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Intention: Embracing each person's potent magic and the transformational power of our discomfort, we work to deepen our relationships in service of liberation for all.

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Community Agreements

Facilitators, please read these agreements to the group, discuss and add more if necessary, and have folks give their consent.

1. **Confidentiality:** We understand that people might be sharing vulnerably during this workshop. We agree to keep these shares confidential. If we want to talk about this workshop to those who were not present, we can share our own personal experiences, but not those of other participants (unless they give permission).
2. **Using “I” statements:** We agree to speak about our own experiences. We cannot assume what another person is experiencing.
3. **Right to pass:** We agree that everyone has the right to pass on any activity, at any time.
4. **Embracing imperfection:** We agree that none of us is perfect, that we all make mistakes, and that we are all here to learn.
5. **Acknowledging impact:** We assume everyone has good intentions here, AND it is important to acknowledge the impact our words and actions have on others. If we are told that we had a negative impact on someone, we agree to apologize without excuses.
6. **Move up, move back:** We agree to consider whether we typically speak a lot/take up a lot of space, or typically hang back. We agree to challenge ourselves and each other to take up less or more space as needed.
7. **Do not expect BIPOC to educate white folks:** We agree to do our own personal work to become anti-racist and not to expect BIPOC to do the labor of educating white folks.

Check-in Rounds

Go around the circle and have each person answer the question “Where is your family from?” Participants may answer in whatever way feels best and may define “family” in whatever way they’d like. If you want to do a second round, you might ask “What are your fears about doing this work?” Participants always have the right to pass.

What is racism? Watch this video and discuss

[5 Things You Should Know About Racism](#) (6 min watch)

1. How have conversations about race gone in your life? Are there areas of your life or community where you are more hesitant to talk about race?
 2. Where in your life have you been impacted by the institutional powers that support racism? How about in Reclaiming? Are there ways in which you have had (or not had) access to parts of our community that are connected to institutional racism?
 3. Do you find yourself making excuses to ease your discomfort when in conversations about race (like you see represented in the video)? Are there ways that you could find accomplices to support you in releasing those excuses and transforming them into curiosity?
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BIPOC vs. POC Terminology: Read this article and discuss

[Why the term BIPOC is so complicated, explained by linguists](#) (12 min read)

1. Say the terms *person of color*, *BIPOC*, *Black*, and *Indigenous* aloud or to yourself in your head. Notice your reactions, thoughts, body sensations, and feelings. What forces have shaped your reactions?
2. deandre miles-hercules identifies both the violence of naming and un-naming (of others) and the power of naming and self-naming. “Coming up with the language to be able to tell our stories is powerful,” they say. “There is no one size fits all. What language do you need? Maybe it already exists and you need to do a little research. Maybe it doesn’t exist, and you need to create that.” Explore this question: What naming do you do that may be violence? What language do you use that may erase nuances of experience? What language do you need to tell your story? What language might you need to seek out or create?
3. This article points out the danger of lumping people into one big group, and it also points out the danger of the culture of individualism. How might we talk about people and people’s struggle without falling into either of these traps?

Read the DARC statement and discuss

[DARC Statement to Reclaiming on Anti-racist Practices](#) (4 min read)

1. What points from this document stand out to you in this moment? How do they land in your body? Without judging yourself for your reaction, how do they impact your energy? What would it look like to invite these points into yourself and your community as a spell?
 2. What wisdom is offered in this statement that can deepen our communities' connection to the land(s) we meet on, live on, and do ritual on?
 3. In what ways does your community practice anti-racism? How do you address expressions of racism and white supremacy within your community/events?
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Anti-Blackness: Read this article and discuss

[Call it What it is: Anti-Blackness](#) (5 min read)

1. What is the difference between “racism” and “anti-blackness”?
 2. When have you experienced or witnessed anti-blackness in Reclaiming communities or rituals?
 3. How can Reclaiming address anti-blackness when it occurs -- or prevent it from occurring in the first place?
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Intersectionality: Watch this video and discuss

[The urgency of intersectionality](#) (18 min watch)

1. How do ‘framing’ and ‘intersectionality’ come up in your local community? Are you able to identify them? Discuss how these show up, and your responses to them.
2. Think about a death or any incident that has involved a Black, indigenous, person of colour/ a person of a culturally and linguistically diverse background (CALD in Australia) that has been covered in your local media. How was it framed? What information was highlighted? What information was missing?
3. What might be useful to consider about intersectionality when we gather on Indigenous land?

Impact vs. Intention: Watch this video and discuss

Impact vs. Intent (2 min watch)

1. Have you ever been in a situation like the one described in the video?
2. What was the situation? How did it affect you? Were you able to resolve the matter?
3. How did you resolve it? How did it make you feel?

Microaggressions: Watch this video and discuss

If microaggressions happened to white people (3 min watch)

1. Reflect on how microaggressions might apply to your own situation. What have YOU said?
2. What are the limits of the empathy you experience in feeling your own microaggressions?
3. List as many microaggressions as you can think of. If you're not sure whether it's a microaggression, list it anyway. You can use the ones in the video to give you ideas about actual racial microaggressions. Choose one microaggression that sounds positive -- e.g., "I love your guys' culture," "I love Mexican food," or "Your eyes are so big." Freewrite for 3 minutes about why this microaggression is an insult. (Freewriting is writing without stopping. Don't worry about spelling or anything.) After 3 minutes, read what you wrote, and write for another 5 minutes. Repeat this process for a microaggression that sounds like an inquiry -- e.g., "Where are you from?" Share your ideas about these microaggressions with a partner.

NOTE: With the prompts about accessing one's own experience of microaggressions, the intention is to access one's empathy. However, it could end up coming back around to centering whiteness or engaging in oppression Olympics, and facilitators many need to watch out for that.

"How to be less racist at Witchcamp" skits: These skits are based on actual events that occurred at various witchcamps. They are examples of microaggressions and racism.

Each skit requires two people. Choose a person A and a person B. After performing each skit, discuss what was racist.

1. A: Hi, my name is _____.

- B: Hi, my name is _____.
- A: Good to meet you. What's your ethnicity? I've been trying to figure it out.
2. A: I'm going to anchor a POC affinity group.
B: But I want POC in MY affinity group because I want to learn from them.
3. A: So were you raised in Reclaiming?
B: No, my parents raised me in a Jodo Shinshu Buddhist community.
A: Wow! You were raised Buddhist? How awesome! That must have been amazing! Tell me all about it.
4. A: I just wanted to tell you that mixed race people are the most beautiful.
B: ----
5. A: You look like Pocahontas.
B: ----
6. A: So your mother is Japanese and your father is white?
B: No, actually it's the other way around. My mom is Polish-Jewish and my father is Japanese.
A: Whoa, that's so unusual. How did that happen?
7. A: Have you been to Japan?
B: No.
A: Wow, really? You don't speak ANY Japanese?
B: No.
A: Why not?
8. A: Cool tattoo, tell me about it.
B: It's a wolf in the art style of Pacific Northwest Native Americans.
A: Are you Native American?
B: No.

Cultural Appropriation: Watch this video and discuss

[7 Myths about Cultural Appropriation Debunked](#) (6 min watch)

1. What are common ways we see cultural appropriation and cultural theft happen in the Reclaiming community?
2. What would be useful to shift as a community to stop our cultural appropriation practices?
3. How can microaggressions contribute to cultural appropriation?

Land Acknowledgments: Read these articles and discuss

[Land Acknowledgements in NeoPagan Rituals \(Turtle Island\) \(12 min read\)](#)

[Why an Acknowledgement of Country is Important \(Australia\) \(3 min read\)](#)

1. How did you come to be on the lands you are on?
 2. Besides the names of the Indigenous nations where you are, what else do you know, and how did you come to know this information/wisdom?
 3. How can we honour and acknowledge our home lands with depth and sincerity?
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Decolonization: Read these articles and discuss

[TeenVogue: What Decolonization Is \(5 min read\)](#)

[Yes!Magazine: White Allies, Let's be Honest about Decolonization \(10 min read\)](#)

What is Decolonization?

Tina Curiel-Allen defines decolonization as “reclaiming what was taken and honoring what we still have.” How do you name what has been taken? Whose responsibility is it to define “what was taken”? Whose responsibility is it to reclaim it? Who is “honoring what we still have”? Is there a way for people who are not indigenous to this land to “honor what we still have” without appropriating culture?

“How do those who have been colonized go about decolonizing?”

Who has been colonized? Were your Ancestors colonized? Tina Curiel-Allen asks, “How do those who have been colonized go about decolonizing?” What do you understand her answer to be? How do you feel in your body when you imagine the possibilities she is offering?

Speaking from a place of “we” and using “I” statements

Curiel-Allen asks, “How do those who have been colonized go about decolonizing? It is in the interest of the colonizer to divide and conquer, to separate us from community, so speaking from a place of *we* is necessary when talking about decolonization. It is as political and communal as it is personal.”

Who is the “we”? If “speaking from a place of *we* is necessary when talking about decolonization” to combat the divide-and-conquer technique of oppressive colonizers, then how do we in Reclaiming reconcile this with our commonly held and often requested practice of speaking only for ourselves in order to minimize harm (in example, using “I” statements or models like non-violent communication)?

Decolonizing through our bodies

1. **Scent:** Curiel-Allen writes, “The elders say we decolonize through our bodies and our values, which quite literally means through the senses. Scent is strongly tied to memory, so we burn sacred herbs, resins, and woods to cleanse and reconnect.” How do you interpret this advice for those of us who are not indigenous to this land? Do you consider

any practices of burning scents as “off limits” to certain people? If scent is “strongly tied to memory,” how do you think it affected the Indigenous peoples of the United States to be prohibited by law from practicing their own religious rituals, including burning of sacred herbs, until 1978? How do you respond to the request from the Chumash people who are concerned about the endangerment of their sacred plant and ceremonies, asking the rest of us not to burn White Sage?

2. **Sound:** Curiel-Allen writes, “We remember by listening to drum and song, the rattle of the gourd, the whistle of the flute, and other instruments. These remind us of a life rhythm that can be easily drowned out in the business of American life. They bring us back home, to ourselves, and to the interconnectedness of all things.”
What is the life rhythm Curiel-Allen refers to? What does life rhythm have to do with decolonization? Being aware of cultural appropriation, what could it look like to decolonize through sound? How can we in Reclaiming use sound to “bring ourselves back home, to ourselves, and to the interconnection of all things?”
3. **Sight -- images of Ancestors, Godds, and Spirits:** Curiel-Allen writes, “We use many things for sight—art, images of our ancestors, of our old gods and goddesses, of our spirit guides.” As pagans and witches, how do we work with Ancestors, Godds, and Spirits with cultural sensitivity? If the Godds or Spirits are from a different culture or race than we are born into, how do we learn what is culturally sensitive? Do you believe Reclaiming should only work with cultures now considered white? Are there any Godds, Ancestors, or Spirits you don’t work with for reasons of cultural sensitivity? Are there Godds, Ancestors or Spirits you will not work with publicly for reasons of cultural appropriation? How do you respond when Anishinaabe people ask you not to claim “spirit animals”? If decolonization is communal and political, as much as it is personal, how do you want us to work with Godds, Ancestors, and Spirits as a tradition?
4. **Sight -- we communicate by how we dress:** Curiel-Allen writes, “We communicate by how we dress, through feathers, fabrics, jewelry, and other things. We also try to view the world and one another differently, to honor the sacred in all of us. We can see with more than just our eyes — beyond what can be ‘seen’ or ‘proved.’” Knowing, for example, that wearing feathered headdresses is a specific cultural tradition of the Plains Indians Nations not meant for outsiders, how can we who are learning about decolonization “communicate by how we dress”? What dress and hairstyles have you heard of that are considered appropriative? Why are some hairstyles, for example the mohawk hairstyle belonging to the Chatiks si chatiks / Pawnee Nation, considered appropriation rather than cultural sharing?
5. **Taste:** Curiel-Allen writes, “Taste is through things like tobacco and through the kinds of foods our relatives ate and grew for generations. These foods are more common than you might think — things like corn, beans, chile, and squash. Foods that nourish our bodies and connect our spirits to the earth they grew from.” For those of us whose Ancestors are not native to the land we are currently living on, how do we decolonize through taste? If they are not the same, how do we come into right relationship with both the foods our Ancestors ate and the foods grown in the land we are currently on? What is the difference between appreciating another culture’s foods and appropriating them?

What does money have to do with it? What examples of food and medicine do you know of that people not in that culture are not welcome to?

“There is value in actively seeking what was lost...”

Curiel-Allen writes, “Decolonizing is about reclaiming what was taken and honoring what we still have. This takes conscious work and effort. There is value in actively seeking what was lost, in remembering what was forgotten.”

What has been lost or forgotten in your lineage? What might you do to actively seek it? What has been lost or forgotten in our lineages as Reclaiming witches? How might we actively seek it?

“Decolonization is a way of life - a path forward”

Curiel-Allen writes, “What I hope to have expressed to you is that decolonization is a way of life — a path forward that connects us to our past, present, and future. It is personal, political, spiritual, and intentional. If the most I have done is introduce you to questions about what decolonization means to you in your own life — wherever you might be reading this from — then I have done well.”

What do you understand about decolonization now that you didn’t earlier? About cultural appropriation? What questions do you still have?

“Decolonization is a way of life: a radical reconsideration”

The DARC letter states that “Whether in the Americas, Australia, or many other areas Reclaiming Tradition is practiced, it is often on the colonized lands of Indigenous peoples. This means not simply acknowledging Indigenous peoples in rituals or classes, but requires a radical reconsideration of what it means to practice the Craft on lands that remain occupied by settler nation-states.”

If decolonization connects us to our past, present, and future, considering the DARC letter, what questions do you have about how we practice in Reclaiming? Who was in our past? Who is here now? Who do you want to be in our future as a tradition?

If decolonization is political and communal, as well as individual, what would it mean to radically reconsider, as a tradition, practicing the Craft on lands occupied by settler nation-states? What needs to be reconsidered? Why? Who needs to do the reconsidering?

If decolonization is a way of life, what do we need to know about decolonization in Reclaiming to be able to move forward?

Racial Healing Handbook Small-group shares

- A. Before breaking into small groups: Go around the circle and describe the earliest time you realized you had a racial identity. (Describe thoughts, feelings, and somatic responses.)
- B. Break into small groups of ~4; answer the following:

1. Describe the first time you saw racism happening (encountered, witnessed, or enacted).
 2. What are some messages you learned about race that you would like to change?
 3. What are some ways you can shift these earlier messages? (e.g., reframe racial stereotypes, re-educate yourself)
 4. When you think about friends and lovers, do they mostly share your race? What is this like for you?
 5. Describe a recent time when somebody in your life -- in family, work, school -- said or did something racist or that reflected internalized racism. Did you respond to this person? Why or why not?
 6. If you could go back in time, how might you respond differently?
 7. How have you raised your race consciousness in the past?
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White Fragility / White Hostility: Read these articles and discuss

Robin DiAngelo: We have to stop thinking of racism as someone who says the N-word (7 min read)

[White fragility? Naw, it's white hostility.](#) (6 min read)

1. The DiAngelo article identifies an aspect of white supremacy in which whiteness is the “default” or “norm for humanity,” and it is people of color who have specific culture or separate social identity. DiAngelo writes: “If that is to be interrupted, then white people must grapple with what it means to be a member of this social group.” What associations do you have with white people as a group in Reclaiming? How might you describe this social group of white Reclaiming witches? Are you a part of this group or not? What does it mean for you to be part or not as an individual and in reference to other social groups or identities you hold?
2. DiAngelo describes her approach to white people seeking easy answers or quick solutions to racism: “I like to push back on that urgency that white people have and the arrogance that there could be some simple, concise answer that could be handed to white people who have never thought about this before. As soon as they start asking what they’re supposed to do, there’s some sarcasm there. That’s not a genuine question, and, in my experience, they won’t do what I offer anyway.” Explore ways that searching for easy answers around racism has been a roadblock to authentic relationship or meaningful change in your life and experience. If you are drawn to seek quick, easy answers or to find answers from others whether they are white or not, what can you notice about that impulse?
3. DiAngelo says, “Most people feel good intentions exempt them and so carry on not doing very much, not doing anything very different in action and practice.” How have

you seen politeness or kindness from white people in Reclaiming towards people of color impact individuals and communities? What has it not changed or impacted?

4. What are the disadvantages of using the phrase “white fragility”? Under what circumstances is “white hostility” more appropriate?
 5. When you have observed or experienced white fragility or hostility, how did this feel in your body? What were your thoughts?
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Don't Call the Police: Read these articles and discuss

[Prison and Police Abolition 101](#) (14 min read)

[How to Never Call the Cops](#) (9 min read)

1. Have you ever called the police? If so, why? How were you feeling at the time?
 2. Have you ever been stopped or questioned by the police? What happened? How did you feel?
 3. Choose one scenario mentioned in the article or one you've experienced -- e.g., there's an unhoused person sleeping on your sidewalk, your bicycle was stolen from your yard, your next-door neighbors are having a loud domestic dispute, your neighbors are violating the pandemic curfew by having a party, someone who has gone off their meds is in your house and you're scared for them and for you. Consider:
 - a. What do I want to happen?
 - b. What would happen if I called the police in this case?
 - c. Is there someone else I can call or other strategies I can use to address the situation?
 - d. If a good solution doesn't exist, what would it look like? Describe the solution that you want to see. (e.g., mental health crisis response teams that can assist someone and connect them to services and follow-up without any law enforcement contacts)
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Additional Resources

1. [It's Going Down: George Floyd Solidarity in the Bay Area](#)
2. [SURJ Toolkit: Calling People in Around “Violence”](#)
3. [“How Can We Win” video](#)
4. [MTV Decoded](#)
5. [Decolonization is Not a Metaphor](#)
6. [Race, Anti-Blackness, and the Cherokee Nation: A Reading List](#)
7. [Resources & Tools regarding Racism and Anti-Blackness](#)
8. [The Anti-Racist Starter Pack](#)

9. Decolonizing Australia
 - a. [NAIDOC](#)
 - b. [My stolen childhood TED Talk](#)

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