

ADDITIONAL IDEAS FOR WAYS WHITE PEOPLE CAN WORK TO HEAL OURSELVES FROM THE WHITE DISEASE OF RACISM

Suggestions from Rose Lewis,
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Over a lifetime of trying to deal with Racism, I have tried many approaches, projects, schemes, etc., both individually and in groups. Here are some ideas I would like to share. I consider Racism to be prejudice plus power, based on a false idea of light skin color being superior to dark skin. People of Color (POC) are discriminated against in myriad ways, and whites must work to change that.

1. Hosting a film series dealing with racism. I got this idea from a couple in Silverton, Oregon who showed the film Inside Peace about a prison in Texas where nonviolent conflict resolution was being taught and practiced by inmates. They invited friends, family, neighbors - anyone - to their home to view this film every Monday evening for several months. I was so impressed, and have been pushing this whenever I can - there are so many good Peace wi Justice films available, and it is quite easy to do. I show a film every month, focusing on racism, so far showing: **I Am Not Your Negro; Selma; Hidden Figures; Sing Your Song; 12 Years a Slave; with Beloved; 13th; Brother Outsider, The Help, Caged Bird** and more coming up. This is a great idea to share with all your peace with justice friends.

2. Displaying materials - in Meetinghouses, your home, etc., - by and about people of color, racism, etc. I have my coffee table covered with books by and about people of color.

3. Attend events sponsored by a variety of groups - NAACP, CAUSA, Mano a Mano, Latinos Unidos Siempre, Racial Justice Organizing Committee, Human Rights Commission, etc. Help publicize; make donations, etc.

4. Rainbow Picnics. For some years our family hosted colorful potluck meals, inviting all the people of color we knew. 42 people came to the first one, half of them children. They wanted to do it again the next week. We couldn't do it that often, but did it once a month for some years. It is a great way to get acquainted, enjoy each other, share concerns.

5. Purge our language of hurtful expressions or descriptions, such as light and dark; as one person of color said to me:

"When goodness is associated with light and lightness, and evil with darkness, it is not that difficult to make the jump and categorize humans as good or evil according to the lightness or darkness of their skin." There are many other usages we need to learn to avoid; so much hurt is done without our awareness or intention. Terms like "white privilege" and "white fragility" need to be

7. Speak Up! December 10 is Human Rights Day, which is a good time for a public forum to hear from people whose human rights are being violated. Some years ago, working with League of Women Voters LWV), AAUW, UNA and YWCA we started Salem Speaks Up!, which just celebrated its 25th anniversary. I was aware that a lot of discrimination was going on which most whites didn't know about, so this open mic format is designed to help raise awareness in the community.

8. Acceptance Study. For LWV I interviewed 41 POC (Latin, African, Asian and Native Americans), to learn about their own experiences of discrimination in Oregon, and other places, asking for ideas for what the League could do to make changes. Experiences were similar, and we were able to use the findings in support of people experiencing bad treatment.

9. Racial Justice Tour of Oregon. A mixed race group of CWU members traveled from Portland to Salem, Eugene, Roseburg and Ashland, visiting CWU groups in each city to share ideas and concerns about racism and what could be done to change it. We were favored with tickets to attend a play in Ashland about racism. Similar tours could be arranged by Meetings in NPYM.

10. Making friends. It is a great blessing to have friendships across racial lines, but not to be taken for granted. Just reaching out to someone of another heritage is not enough - it must be based on a real interest in that person, and an openness to their experiences. Just acting friendly may come across as not being sincere. POC have busy lives, and friendships are to be treasured.

11, Mixed-race small groups. Years ago in San Francisco I put together a small group - similar education, interests, equal number white and POC. We met each month for a potluck meal and discussion, sharing ideas and concerns, etc. I certainly learned a lot.

12. Action. If you learn of someone who has been treated badly (by police, in a store, at school, losing a job, etc), consider exploring with them whether there is something you and others can do. Maybe help gather information for the person, go to a court hearing, testify, etc. Years ago a good friend was denied service at a restaurant and I put together a little group I called "Friends of _____," and we were able to help deal with the issue.