

# BSV **Racial Justice Activation Circles**

## Affinity Group Spaces for Non-Black Allies



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### The Path Leading to Now

Throughout the 2019-20 school year, Berkeley Schools Volunteers (BSV) collaborated with the Office of Family Engagement & Equity to lead equity trainings for hundreds of classroom volunteers. In these trainings, we focused on structural racism, examined historical and contemporary inequities in American public schooling, and explored how these inequities play out – and can & must be disrupted – in Berkeley’s own classrooms.

Recent anti-Black violence and police brutality and a groundswell of Black-led protests and actions have fomented a broader and renewed movement for racial justice across the country (and the world), and organizations across sectors are showing up in new ways for this work. Berkeley Schools Volunteers, and the Berkeley Public Schools Fund, are deepening our commitment to showing up as anti-racists in the movement for racial justice.

### Project & Project Goals

This summer, BSV will be convening 8-week **Racial Justice Activation Circles** for non-Black volunteers within our community. We encourage you to participate whether you’re a long-time classroom volunteer, a newer remote learning mentor, or a COVID-response volunteer from this past Spring. In these circles, participants will educate themselves and each other, reflect together and individually, and commit to concrete, anti-racist actions within their own spheres of influence.

### Project Structures

Circles will meet virtually once a week for 8 weeks, from the week of June 29<sup>th</sup> through the week of August 17<sup>th</sup>. Circles will be formed according to participants’ affinity group & scheduling preferences. Weekly circles will last 1.5 hours and take place on Zoom. Participants must commit to attending at least 7 of the 8 sessions.

As the basis for shared learning, BSV offers the following texts and media sources, though different affinity groups may modify their own curriculum as they see fit.

- [Me & White Supremacy](#) (e-book with daily writing prompts) by Layla Saad
- [21-day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge](#) (articles, podcasts & videos curated by the American Bar Association)

Participants should expect to spend 15-30 minutes a day on reading, reflection &/or action planning.



BSV is organizing all Circles using a non-hierarchical model “for deep conversation and wise outcomes” called ‘[The Circle Way](#)’ which author Layla Saad suggests for groups reading their book.

- Circles will be comprised of 10-12 participants and 1-2 organizers
- Circles will include others who identify with the same racial/ethnic identity
- Circle organizers (affinity group peers equally committed to the learning) are not traditional “experts” or “facilitators.” Instead, their charge is to help the group hold itself to the norms and practices of ‘The Circle Way.’

### **What the Project Is & Isn’t**

All participants should expect to:

- Show up courageously for every session, using the norms of the Circle Way
- Give and receive feedback that propels individual and collective learning
- Move beyond self-study toward the articulation of specific anti-racist actions that advance the cause of racial justice within one’s own spheres of influence

Circles are **not** gatherings of friends, nor spaces for socializing, though we will most likely find commonality in our shared experiences and build intimacy across the weeks. Circles are spaces for individuals who share a deep commitment to self-reflection but remain committed to moving toward concrete actions for racial justice.

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### **Interested in Becoming a Circle Organizer?**

- Circle organizers will be trained via Zoom by BSV in ‘The Circle Way’ norms and meeting structures on Monday June 29 from 3:30-5:30pm
- Circle organizers do not have to be “experts” in this work. In fact, they need to be able to show up both as a gentle guide and an equal participant in the work, rather than as an expert facilitator or traditional “leader.”
- Circle organizers will meet as an organizer group as needed to share successes, questions, and learnings about their Circles.

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