

White People Showing Up for Racial Justice

Striving to Be More Thoughtful, Reflexive, and Active

Think of this resource not as a checklist, but a kind of guided reflection tool for checking your privilege, taking responsibility for your education, being responsive and responsible in the fight to dismantle white supremacy, and building your capacity to show up for racial justice. These questions are framed for individual reflection, but 'I' can be replaced with 'we' when using these questions in your organizations or collective practice. Once you read through the questions, return to them again and again and seek supplementary resources, because this work will not be done in our lifetimes. Keep working to build a different future.

Santa Cruz Chapter – Showing Up for Racial Justice

This is a work-in-progress. If you have ideas or suggestions, please email us at scsurj@gmail.com

How am I showing up?

- How am I educating myself about the history of my community and country that I haven't been taught?
- How am I acknowledging and disrupting my white privilege?
- How am I defecting from white supremacy? How am I breaking white silence?¹
- Am I noticing who is the center of attention and power? Am I noticing how many people of color are present or absent in the personal, public, and professional places I live in? How am I working to disrupt consolidating power and attention for white people?²
- Am I taking responsibility for my *impacts*, not just my *intentions*?³
- Am I clear about my motivations in participating in current struggles and actions? If I find myself seeking validation, how can I step back to reflect on this before reengaging further?⁴
- How am I working to act in solidarity and disrupting habits of white privilege, like trying to “help” or “save” people of color or engaging transactionally?⁵
- How am I centering those who are most impacted by systems of oppression? How am I lowering barriers for people from oppressed communities to speak for themselves rather than speaking on their behalf?⁶
- Am I examining and expressing my own racialized experience as a white person instead of relying on people of color to examine and express their racialized experience?⁷
- When I talk about racism, am I lifting up the experiences of people of color and acknowledging that they have been talking about these issues for a long time and getting routinely ignored in the process?⁸
- Am I actively listening when people of color (POC) speak about their experiences?⁹ Am I speaking up for Black and POC lives when Black and POC people aren't around?¹⁰
- If I am willing to say Black Lives Matter, what I am doing to *show* it?¹¹
- How am I showing up for racial justice in between peaks in media coverage of racialized violence?¹² How am I paying attention to and contesting routinized, everyday forms of structural racism, in addition to major acts of televised violence?¹³
- Am I willing to use my white body as a shield in direct actions organized by POC?¹⁴
- How am I promoting a commitment to justice in the organizations I'm involved in and helping to create an environment that is hospitable?¹⁵
- Are the local organizations I'm involved in, including my workplace, making efforts to hire and retain people of color? When possible, are we donating and/or redistributing funds to support people of color-led organizations and causes?¹⁶
- How am I holding people in authority accountable for taking action against systemic racism?¹⁷
- If I see police interacting with a person of color, do I stop and watch to hold the police accountable for their actions?¹⁸
- Am I sharing resources (monetary, connections, or otherwise) with people of color friends and/or people of color-led community organizations?¹⁹
- If I'm involved in creative arts, how am I working to involve and promote artists of color?

How am I working with other white people?

- How am I mobilizing other white people to dismantle systems of whiteness from within?²⁰
- Am I calling people in or out? How am I developing strategies for calling people in?
- How am I doing the labor of being patient and compassionate with other white people instead of dismissing their views without engagement?²¹
- In my spheres of influence, am I interrupting racism by challenging practices and policies that protect and sustain privilege?²²
- Am I prepared to ask other white people for constructive feedback and to alter my methods and practices accordingly?
- Am I working against the ways that white privilege breeds individualism and competition between white people to be the “best” antiracist?
- How am I fostering collectivity among other white people to work toward racial justice?²³
- Am I engaging in difficult conversations about racism with people I care about and with people I don't?²⁴
- Am I talking with my children and other young white people in my life about racism and racial justice? How am I finding resources and support to keep working to do this better?²⁵
- How am I participating in base-building – reaching out to other white people to broaden the base of antiracist collective action? How am I facilitating other people's connections with current political struggles led by individuals and groups with a clear antiracist analysis?²⁶

How am I supporting people of color and people of color-led movements?

- Am I taking informed and thoughtful risks and making mistakes? If I make a mistake, how am I acknowledging it and taking responsibility? How am I learning from my mistakes to minimize future harm?
- How am I checking in thoughtfully to work against a white habit of ‘frantic-checking-in’?²⁷
- When engaging in a direct action organized by people of color, how am I working to decenter myself and whiteness? How am I listening when people of color remind me and other white people, ‘White protesters, this is NOT about you’?²⁸
- Am I respecting Black and POC spaces for emotional and mental healing?²⁹
- If I'm in a predominantly Black or POC space, am I listening, checking in when appropriate, and taking direction instead of trying to lead or take up space?³⁰
- How am I working to develop long-term multidimensional relationships of mutuality and accountability with people of color?³¹
- Am I prepared to alter my methods or practices when and if people of color give me feedback and offer criticism?³²
- How am I resisting and disrupting the “white savior complex”? Am I asking if assistance and advice are needed before providing it for actions organized by and for people of color?³³

How am I educating myself?

- How am I taking responsibility for my own education?³⁴
- What is my regular practice for educating myself about white supremacy and how to dismantle it?³⁵
- Can I define, describe, and give (personal) examples of white supremacy and systemic racism?³⁶ Can I explain why ‘reverse racism’ does not exist?³⁷ Have I practiced talking about this with other people who will listen, ask clarifying questions, and give me feedback?
- Can I define, describe, and give (personal) examples of white privilege? Have I practiced talking about this with other people who will listen, ask clarifying questions, and give me feedback?³⁸
- Can I define, describe, and give examples of how racism and privilege intersect with other forms of oppression, like patriarchy, socioeconomic inequality, and transphobia? Have I practiced talking about this with other people who will listen, ask clarifying questions, and give me feedback?
- Am I familiar with the concept of white fragility and working to address it when I see myself or others enacting it?³⁹
- How am I examining what it means to be white? Am I pausing regularly to ask what it means to be white in this situation or in that encounter? What is the work I need to do here and now, as a white person?⁴⁰
- How am I recognizing the ways that my white privilege operates as both a shield of protection and a set of blinders in my life?⁴¹
- How am I learning about and from the history of struggles toward Black liberation? How am I learning about and from the roles white people have played in supporting Black liberation?⁴² How am I learning about the ways that modern forms of racial oppression are intertwined with the justice system and the prison-industrial complex?⁴³
- How am I learning about and from the history of whiteness and racism? How can I learn from the ways racism has shifted over time and the tactics that have worked effectively against it?⁴⁴
- How am I educating myself on settler colonialism and Indigenous dispossession?⁴⁵
- Am I seeking out news sources, books, and other forms of media that will deepen my understanding of systems of oppression?⁴⁶
- Am I educating myself about critiques and concerns about white allyship?⁴⁷ How might I think of myself as an accomplice, comrade, or co-conspirator? How am I thinking about allyship not as an identity but as a process or a verb?⁴⁸ How am I enacting my support for racial justice – not just claiming an “ally” identity?⁴⁹
- How am I educating myself on microaggressions and other influences white supremacy has on my thinking and speaking? Some examples of common microaggressions to learn more about and to stop:
 - calling on a Black person or a person of color to ‘articulate’ or speak for all people within their community
 - saying ‘one of my best friends is Black’ or a person of color to distance myself from white supremacy and racism
 - reinforcing the myth of meritocracy by insisting that my or other white people’s privileges are solely a result of hard work
 - insisting that love or friendship with all with make everything all right
 - saying ‘I don’t see color’
 - expecting trust and respect rather than earning and enacting it
 - suggesting that people of color should ‘let go of the past’ or that racism is a thing of the past for society or myself
 - equating a single shared situation of pain with a lifetime of oppression in an effort to show ‘empathy’
 - suggesting that ‘all lives matter’
 - thinking that being progressive means I cannot be enacting anti-Black behaviors.⁵⁰

How am I building my capacity to do this work?

- How am I building my capacity to embrace and sustain discomfort?⁵¹ How am I finding ways to replenish my energy to keep going?⁵²
- Who are the people that inspire me to keep going? What lessons can I learn from their efforts and their mistakes?⁵³
- Am I loving myself and others enough to do the deep work of truth-telling and healing so that together we might repair the breaches that racism creates?⁵⁴ Am I being kind to myself and others as we learn together?⁵⁵
- How am I holding space to process my emotions in doing this work?
- Am I processing my emotions with other white people?⁵⁶ Am I engaging in processes of mutual support with other white people?⁵⁷
- How am I working to stay grounded?⁵⁸
- If I begin to feel shame or guilt, how am I working through these feelings to feed into my actions toward change?⁵⁹
- If I get called out or feel defensive, am I making a concerted effort to slow down, listen, reflect, and learn?⁶⁰
- When hearing critiques of whiteness and white supremacy, am I working against white privileged behavioral tendencies to over-personalize, dismiss, or downplay these critiques?⁶¹

Cited Resources

Note: This resource cites numerous online articles designed to encourage more thoughtful white anti-racist action. Authors' suggestions and feedback were reframed into questions for reflection. Links to each article are provided below. The first time a reference is cited, titles and authors are provided, with links only in subsequent citations. These resources direct you to more resources, including fiction and non-fiction books, articles, videos, social media, and other genres to deepen your learning, reflection, and action.

1

* Black Lives Matter co-founder Alicia Garza: "We need you defecting from white supremacy and changing the narrative of white supremacy by breaking white silence."

2

* www.eastbaymeditation.org/media/docs/4789_TWSSpring07GuidelinesAllies.pdf
* www.rawstory.com/2016/07/here-are-11-things-white-people-should-do-to-truly-fight-racism/
* baysolidarity.wordpress.com/2014/12/19/protocolandprinciples/

3

* www.showingupforracialjustice.org/act_up_accountably

4

* Racardo Levins Morales: "One more thing. You may not get the validation you hunger for. Stepping outside of the smoke and mirrors of racial privilege is hard, but so is living within the electrified fences of racial oppression – and no one gets cookies for that. The thing is that when you help put out a fire the people whose home was in flames may be too upset to thank and praise you – especially when you look a lot like the folks who set the fire. That's OK. This is about something so much bigger than that."
* whitepriv.blogspot.com/2010/02/10-ways-to-be-and-ally.html

5

* Martin Luther King, Jr.: "Philanthropy is commendable but it must not cause the philanthropist to overlook the circumstances of economic injustice which make philanthropy necessary."

6

* mashable.com/2016/01/10/ally-to-people-of-color/#WpZ1e3f5nPqq

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* reflections.yale.edu/article/future-race/becoming-trustworthy-white-allies

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* jlovecalderon.com/code-of-ethics-for-antiracist-white-allies/,
* www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/08/06/this-is-what-white-people-can-do-to-support-blacklivesmatter/
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* thefeminismproject.com/harder-stuff/how-to-be-an-ally-101-for-white-folks-wanting-to-be-anti-racist-allies/

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* [7 Ways to Be a Better Ally After Police Murder Black People](http://www.care2.com/causes/7-ways-to-be-a-better-white-ally-after-police-murder-black-people.html), by Kevin Mathews (www.care2.com/causes/7-ways-to-be-a-better-white-ally-after-police-murder-black-people.html)

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* www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/08/06/this-is-what-white-people-can-do-to-support-blacklivesmatter/

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* www.scn.org/friends/ally.html

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* [Code of Ethics for Antiracist White Allies](http://jlovecalderon.com/code-of-ethics-for-antiracist-white-allies/), by JLove Calderon and Tim Wise (jlovecalderon.com/code-of-ethics-for-antiracist-white-allies/)

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* www.care2.com/causes/7-ways-to-be-a-better-white-ally-after-police-murder-black-people.html

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* www.care2.com/causes/7-ways-to-be-a-better-white-ally-after-police-murder-black-people.html
* [How to Be a White Ally: Fighting Racism Is Your Responsibility – Start Now](http://www.salon.com/2016/07/08/how_to_be_a_white_ally_fighting_racism_is_your_responsibility_start_now/), by Kirsten Clodfelter (www.salon.com/2016/07/08/how_to_be_a_white_ally_fighting_racism_is_your_responsibility_start_now/)

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* [Only White People Can Save Themselves from Racism and White Supremacism](http://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/06/19/only-white-people-can-save-themselves-from-racism-and-white-supremacism/?tid=a_inl), by Baynard Woods (www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/06/19/only-white-people-can-save-themselves-from-racism-and-white-supremacism/?tid=a_inl)
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* www.theroot.com/articles/culture/2014/08/ferguson_how_white_people_can_be_allies/2/,
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* [Melanie Morrison, reflections.yale.edu/article/future-race/becoming-trustworthy-white-allies](http://reflections.yale.edu/article/future-race/becoming-trustworthy-white-allies)

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* baysolidarity.wordpress.com/2014/12/19/protocolandprinciples/

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* Dear White Protesters, by Bends Toward Justice, bendstowardjustice.tumblr.com/post/104742740875/dear-white-protestors

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* blackmillennials.com/2014/10/16/how-to-be-a-white-ally/
* www.tolerance.org/supplement/white-anti-racism-living-legacy

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* A 5-Step Guide for Macklemore and White Allies Afraid of Doing Anti-Racism 'Wrong', by Maisha Z. Johnson (everydayfeminism.com/2016/01/macklemore-white-allies-hesitating/)
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* How To Be a White Ally by Black Millenials (blackmillennials.com/2014/10/16/how-to-be-a-white-ally/),
* How Do I Explain White Supremacy to My White Friends by Dr. Hunt (www.askdrhunt.net/questions/2016/5/9/how-do-i-explain-white-supremacy-to-my-white-friends)
* I'm Tired of White Supremacy... And I'm Tired of Teaching You About It, by Candace S. (medium.com/@candycomball/im-tired-of-explaining-white-supremacy-to-white-people-aa78d1d70e27)
* White Privilege, by Christopher Bowers (whitepriv.blogspot.com/2010/02/10-ways-to-be-and-ally.html)
* 5 Initial Ways You Can Be a Better Ally to People of Color, by Savonne Anderson (mashable.com/2016/01/10/ally-to-people-of-color/#WpZle3f5nPqq)
* This Is What White People Can Do to Support #BlackLivesMatter, by Sally Kohn (www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/08/06/this-is-what-white-people-can-do-to-support-blacklivesmatter/)
* Act Up Accountably, by Dara Silverman (www.showingupforracialjustice.org/act_up_accountably)

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* Curriculum for White Americans to Educate Themselves on Race and Racism – from Ferguson to Charleston, by Jon Greenberg (citizenshipandsocialjustice.com/2015/07/10/curriculum-for-white-americans-to-educate-themselves-on-race-and-racism/)

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* Racism = prejudice (preconceived feeling, belief, or emotion against a person of a different group) + privilege (unearned advantage or benefit) + power (the ability to successfully and methodologically exert influence) (blackmillennials.com/2014/10/16/how-to-be-a-white-ally/)
* What Is Systemic Racism, by Race Forward (www.raceforward.org/videos/systemic-racism)
* White Anti-Racism: Living the Legacy, by Teaching Tolerance (www.tolerance.org/supplement/white-anti-racism-living-legacy)

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* 29 Stupid Things White People Do and What We Can Do Instead, by Baltimore Racial Justice Action (bmreantiracist.org/white-people/29-stupid-things-white-people-do-and-what-we-can-do-instead/)

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* Tim Wise and the Failure of Privilege Discourse, by R.L Stephens II (www.orchestratedpulse.com/2013/10/tim-wise-failure-privilege-discourse/)

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* White Fragility: Why It's So Hard to Talk to White People About Racism, by Robin DiAngelo (goodmenproject.com/featured-content/white-fragility-why-its-so-hard-to-talk-to-white-people-about-racism-twlm/)

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- * How to Be an Ally If You Are a Person with Privilege, by Frances E. Kendall (www.scn.org/friends/ally.html)

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- * Guidelines for Being a Strong White Ally, by Paul Kivel (www.eastbaymeditation.org/media/docs/4789_TWSpring07GuidelinesAllies.pdf)

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- * 12 Ways to Be a White Ally to Black People, by Jane Woods (www.theroot.com/articles/culture/2014/08/ferguson_how_white_people_can_be_allies/)

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- * The Maturation of the White Ally, by Mushim Patricia Ikeda (whiteawake.org/2016/05/16/the-maturation-of-a-white-ally/)
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- * 'We Need Co-Conspirators, Not Allies': How White Americans Can Fight Racism, by Rose Hackman (www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/26/how-white-americans-can-fight-racism)
- * While Families Mourn Their Dead, My Life Goes On, by Justin Adkins (medium.com/showing-up-for-racial-justice-surj/while-families-mourn-their-dead-my-life-goes-on-682ba55a9685#.k2lce37q2)

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- * Word to the Wise: Unpacking the White Privilege of Tim Wise, by Ewuare X. Osayande (osayande.org/2013/08/word-to-the-wise-unpacking-the-white-privilege-of-tim-wise/)

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- * Lillian Roybal Rose: "I tell white people in my workshop that I expect them, as allies with power in the oppression of racism, to act justly and not dominate, regardless of the fact that we may never love them." quoted in reflections.yale.edu/article/future-race/becoming-trustworthy-white-allies

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- * Want to Help End Systemic Racism? First Step: Drop the White Guilt, by Sincere Kirabo (thehumanist.com/commentary/want-to-help-end-systemic-racism-first-step-drop-the-white-guilt_)
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Notes

DRAFT

White People Showing Up for Racial Justice

Striving to Be More
Thoughtful, Reflexive, and Active

Santa Cruz Chapter – Showing Up for Racial Justice

This is a work-in-progress. If you have ideas or suggestions, please email us at scsurj@gmail.com