

What is a Community of Practice?

A Community of Practice (CofP) is a group of people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavor.

The Community of Practice cohorts at Ampersand are geared to white folks interested in doing the work of being anti-racist and centering anti-racism in all we do. With consideration of separate roles and challenges in the nonprofit sector, Cohorts are built to connect different affinity groups. Together, we will engage in guided, collaborative learning in alignment with the charge that white people have been given by BIPOC communities to take responsibility for moving from an embrace of white supremacy towards a place where we can be useful partners for justice.

Is it only open to white people?: This CofP is geared to white people working on whiteness and anti-racism from a foundational level and the position of power and privilege white folks have. BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, people of color) folks are always welcome, though we don't ever want to give the impression that the often very frustrating work of organizing white people should be put on BIPOC folks non-voluntarily. Our team will reach out to BIPOC folks interested in this CofP to maximize harm reduction.

Why a white-affiliated Community of Practice (adapted from "[About Study Group](#)" from WHAT'S UP?! Pittsburgh)

- We are part of a historical white antiracist movement responding to the voices of activists who called on white people to go work with other white people to end racism.
- We believe that white supremacy will not fall without white people actively collaborating and fighting against it.
- It is often said that white people listen to white people with different ears, meaning that white people dismiss criticism or information about racism when it comes from people of color.
- It has also been said that the responsibility of teaching white people about racism should not fall on the backs of people of color (BIPOC).
- People of color have a lot more to lose by engaging in conversations about racism with inexperienced white people, who need a relatively safe (though not uncomplicated or pain-free) space to be vulnerable, to risk, in order to process internalized supremacy without simultaneously hurting BIPOC.
- Racism silences white people; we are often afraid to talk around BIPOC for fear of offending them and being perceived as racist.
- These study groups and workshops create a space for white people to unravel their feelings and ways of understanding without hurting people of color.
- It's also important to note that people of color create a majority of the material we study. We are availing ourselves of many books, videos, articles, that have already been created from the hearts and minds of BIPOC; we,

therefore, learn more directly (from) people of color perspectives, even though only white people are physically present in the room.

Strategic Value/Learning goals:

- Create a shared understanding of racism, anti-racism, whiteness, white supremacy in the nonprofit sector.
- Have a space to share the anti-racism work your organization is doing, the role of leadership in that work, and articulate hurdles, struggles, and successes of the work.
- Gain knowledge and understanding from other leaders in the sector.
- Have work, ideas, and plans to bring back to your organization to move toward community-responsive/antiracist work.

Participant Commitments:

- Attend all 1.5-hour sessions (6 total, every other week)
- Read materials prior to each session (15-20 minutes)
- Come prepared with examples of your work and/or your organization's work as it relates to the topic of the week (20 minutes)