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TIPS FOR LEADING WITH INTENTION AND TAKING ACTION STEPS IN THE FIGHT FOR RACIAL JUSTICE



In partnership with leaders of color from MENTOR Affiliates, MENTOR New York has compiled the following tips to help guide mentoring and youth-facing program leaders in the fight for racial justice.

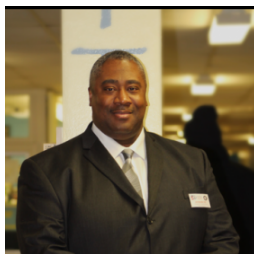
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BEST PRACTICES



For leadership:

- Look at who sits at the table
- Assess the urgency
 - What can you do immediately?
- Evaluate if you are practicing what you are preaching
- Avoid dancing around the corners and have the courage to start the tough conversations about racial justice and equity
- Take this time and opportunity to assess where you are on the continuum of allyship
 - Who are your vendors?
 - What are your hiring practices?
 - Are you doing the analysis and advocating for policy changes?
 - Are you involved in not just mentoring legislation, but all legislation that impacts young people?
- Think about how you can shift the power
 - Identify a leader of color to run the Board
 - Include young people to join the Board
 - Plan for this shift in power and think about how you can share, transition and support power

For caring adults:

- Ask young people how they are doing and be prepared to really know how they are doing
- Support young people when they tell you how they are doing and be sure to address them socially, emotionally and academically
- Build young people to be civically engaged and teach them how they can leverage their power
- Treat young people as an asset and not a liability
- Do not invalidate a young person's experience and do not cut them off in a conversation

For programs and schools:

- Partner with other local organizations who are lifting and supporting the Black community
- Ask yourself how your program is ensuring that they are not perpetuating practices of white supremacy
- Be proactive and bring together a cohort of concerned programs to help move towards liberation
- Acknowledge that for a long time, the mentoring movement has been inherently racist
- Look inward and ask yourself:
 - Are mentors trained to mentor Black and Brown youth?
 - Do the mentors in your program reflect the population you serve?
 - Do Board members reflect the communities you serve?
 - What does recruitment look like and is it inclusive?
 - Do the resources you share empower young people to consider other people's point of view?
 - Do the resources you share promote or dominate the white point of view?
 - Are you being inclusive to ALL black lives (Black women, Black LGBTQQ+, etc.)?
- Language matters in this movement and can shape how individuals think of young people of color
- Solutions should look and feel like the people you serve in your community
- Understand that it is not a person of color's job to undo racism
- Look outside the box on how you bring young people into the space
- Human testimony is an assessment and young people will tell you what they need
 - It's about listening to the voices rather than looking for the percentages

BEST PRACTICES



For funding:

- Find the data
 - You will see that historically, white agencies get more funding
- Fund and support agencies led by people of color
- Ensure money stays inside the community
 - Use local and people of color-owned vendors
- Create conversation with funders that are clear and specific
- Remember, it is not about charity, it is about restoring power to the communities where their powers are stripped
- Look at funding through a racial equity lens
 - Who are the agencies serving?
 - Who is leading the agency?
 - Are you making a pledge to racial equity?
- Require prerequisites in order to secure funding
 - For example, racial equity trainings

For recruiting male mentors of color:

- Know your audience and know who is recruiting
 - Individuals tend to recruit who they feel most comfortable around
- Language and speaking from a strengths-based model is important
- Do not assume men of color will say yes on the first ask
 - Most likely, men of color who you think would make great mentors are already busy, engaged in their community and informally mentoring
- Manage expectations
 - Men of color deserve a full recruitment process
 - Trust and rapport needs to be built
- Create multiple pathways to engage men of color – it cannot and should not be traditional
 - For example, think about project-based mentoring, or engaging more coaches
- Have a space for men of color to come together
 - Stop creating an idea of what a mentor is or should be, not every individual can fit into one vision
 - Create a committee of men of color from different sectors (politicians, businessmen, teachers, poets etc.) because each of them will go back to their network to share the different mentoring opportunities available
- Allow men of color to come into a space where they can own their story

MENTOR New York is here to be your thinking partner!

For more information about how your program can implement these tips, email jkavanaugh@mentorkids.org

To watch the recording of our panel discussion about Leading with Intention in the Fight for Racial Justice, [use this link.](#)

To watch the recording of our Mentoring Take Two: Leading with Intention in the Fight for Racial Justice, [use this link.](#)